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Plus: Urinal Fiction, Communist Zine Archives and More!

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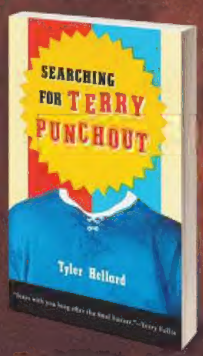

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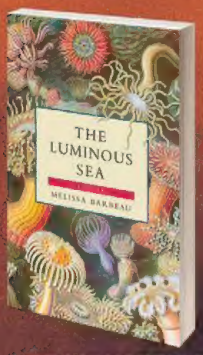

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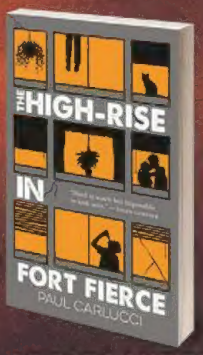

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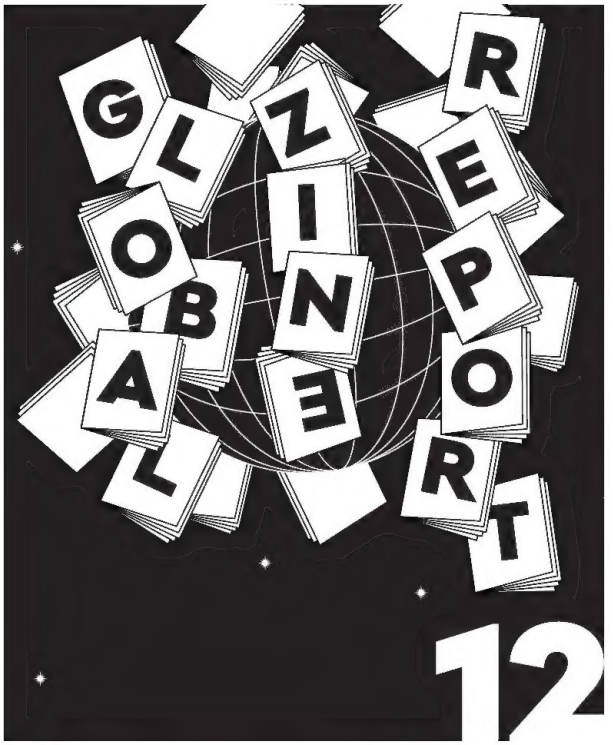

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ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL CONSEIL DES ARTS DE L'ONTARIO
50 YEARS OF ONTARIO GOVERNMENT SUPPORT OF THE ARTS
50 ANS DE SOUTIEN DU GOUVERNEMENT DE L'ONTARIO AUX ARTS

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Lisa Pijuan-Nomura is a Hamilton-based collage artist, storyteller and creativity coach. She has always loved zines and has created two. *Pity Face* tells stories of her dealing with cancer in 2016, and *Collagio* is a collection of thoughts, quotes and lists about collage and creativity. In 2019, Lisa will do the final installation of The Artist Is In, her public performance of art, a project that she has been working on for the past 5 years. For more info see www.girlcancreate.com

EVERY DAY I WAKE UP and I feel this funny mixture of emotions. It's part dread and part anxiety; that kind of knot in your stomach. But it's also a weird focus, a kind of conviction.

The world is bleak right now. There's no denying it. We are asked to measure out our sympathies, and to cry proportionally for each crisis. We weep for starvation in Venezuela, unspeakable tragedies in Yemen, serial gun massacres across America — all while grappling with Canada's complicity in the geopolitical chaos. That's not to mention our paralyzing inability to reckon with ongoing colonial violence and inequality right here on this land. And yet I also feel the fire, the urgency. I've never felt more committed to supporting the organizing I care about.

After Trump was elected, I even felt, for the first time since I moved here nine years ago, that it might be worthwhile to go home to Philly and join the fight. Of course, I was quickly reminded of the fights in my own backyard here in Toronto: the Overdose Prevention Sites on the line, Stolen Children camps in Saskatchewan and Queen's Park, racist police, the housing crisis, teachers fighting for the right to knowledge and respect for LGBTQ students in Ontario. Shit is rough, it's complex, and it can be paralyzing to think about.

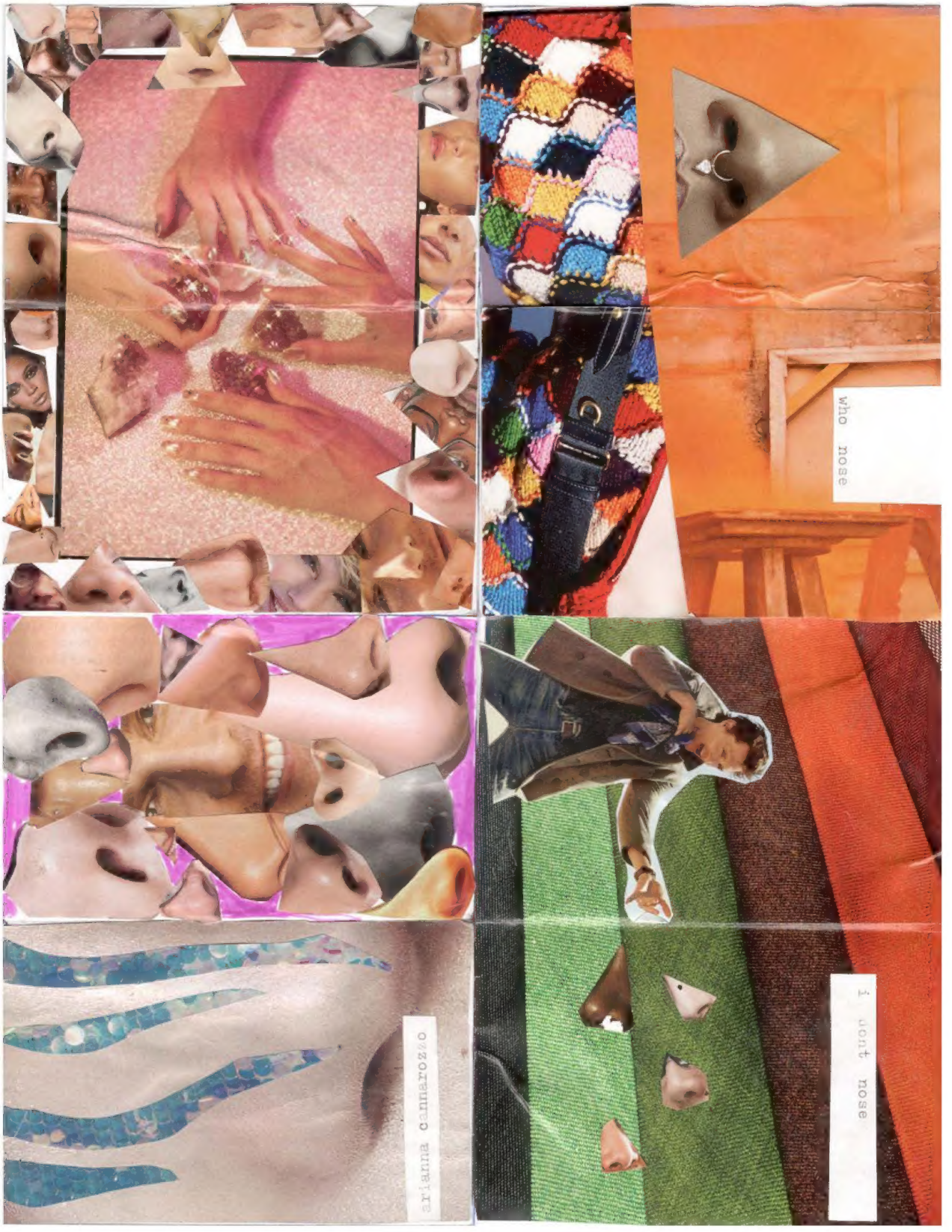
And somehow, we are asked to push forward with the mundane tasks of our day-to-day lives. We go to work, we see friends, we make dinner. We make art, and we manage to build resilient communities. Most importantly, we speak back to the dark clouds above.

Perhaps that's why we see a resurgent interest in noir, the genre of bleak criminality, nihilism, and, somehow, a dark romance. As Leah Coppella argues in our cover feature, noir is coming back because once more, our political structures, our environment, our cities seem ever more stacked against the well-being of the masses. Yet, the creators using noir to reflect back society's ills in 2018 are doing so with a new analysis around gender, race, and class that is subverting and challenging noir's traditionally macho-white-guy underpinnings. It's an awesome thing, and profoundly telling of the world we are negotiating.

As I try to wrap my brain around the horrors happening here and elsewhere, I also find myself delighted and surprised by the ways people resist, small and large. I had the privilege of interviewing more than a dozen zinesters and organizers from around the world for this issue. I made new friends from Slovenia to South Africa, and learned about how zine communities new and old continue to create spaces where artists, writers, and everyday people can share their practice on their own terms. The emerging scenes in Beijing and Shanghai, the long held and diverse zine scenes in Indonesia, the absolutely massive and vibrant Australian zine scene, they all give me hope.

I don't know if zines alone will save the world, destroy fascism, and redistribute wealth (though a girl can dream, right?). But when on any given day you might wake up and find out that Trump has cut off aid to Palestine, that another journalist was killed in the Congo, that the Queen of Soul, Aretha Franklin, has left this dimension... Well, I'll be damned if we don't create our own narratives, our own networks, our own knowledges. It's okay if we can't always do it all, cry for everything wrong in our hometowns or other hemispheres. But let's keep making our own small beacons of hope and power if we can.

Jonathan



In July, *Broken Pencil* hosted a zine workshop at the LitBang pop-up space in Toronto. One of the particularly memorable zines that came out of that workshop is this nose-themed zine by Ari Cannarozzo, our incredible summer placement student. Here's the full spread of the zine, ready to fold and cut. We'll miss you, Ari!

Soviet Zines Live On!

When Mark Yoffe was a teenager in Soviet-controlled Riga, Latvia, everything looked ridiculous. As he tells it, both the Soviet bureaucracy of censorship and control, and the ultra-serious resistance to it in the form of dissidents and nationalists, seemed silly and pointless. What mattered? Rock n' roll, weird art and anything that showed the adults what fools they were, of course. In 1977, he and his pals published what is now described as the "first ever Soviet rock zine," *Bez Zhmogas*. They then formed garage avant-garde ensemble *Путь толстых* ("The way of the fat ones") that made home recordings ranging from mocking audio plays to conceptual music. Yoffe and friends also released the underground art and literature almanac *Дело #1*. But, as Yoffe tells it, the second edition was never published because the only original was "borrowed" by a companion and known KGB collaborator and never seen again. Yoffe had enough, and eventually made his way out of the USSR and to the US.

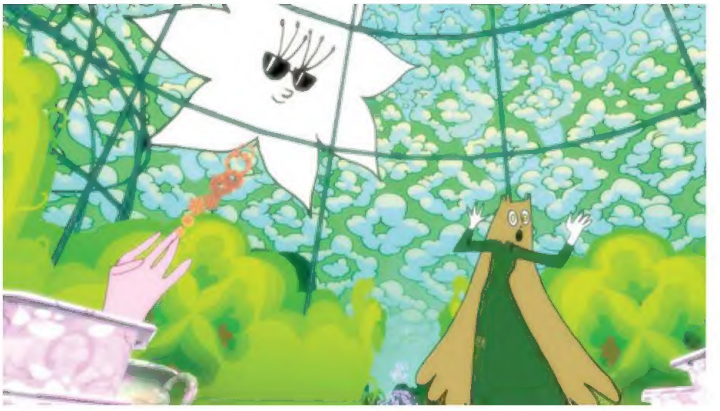
Today, he presides over one of the world's largest collections of Soviet and Perestroika era zines as part of the International Counterculture Archive at the Global Resources Center of George Washington University in Washington, DC. The collection is open to the public by appointment, so if you're in DC, drop by and check out a one of a kind historical archive that includes Yoffe's first zine!

More info on the archive at: **home.gwu.edu/~yoffe** (Hal Niedzviecki)

Coffee People Zine

Zines and coffee: a classic, undeniable match. And now, Kat Melheim has created the perfect zine to go with a steaming cup of joe. The collaborative *Coffee People* zine, based in Denver, CO, is focused on everything coffee-related: coffee farmers and processors knowing their rights in the workplace, the artists that work with coffee, and the art of preparing coffee itself. For every zine that she sells, Melheim donates $1 to a different coffee charity. As Melheim says, "it's good stewardship to engage responsibly within this world, I must share my space and my resources." So, this barista dedicates her free time to running this zine on her own. "There's a richness and a depth in this community," she reflects. "I was lucky enough to find it." You can purchase issues 1 and 2 — in print and digitally — on **coffeepeople.org**, as well look for as issue 3 on September 22nd, and issue 4 on December 21st. (Daniela Barrera Murcia)

Museum of Symmetry



Museums parade as halls of cultural authority, but as any kid who has ever tried to sleep over in a planetarium can tell you, they are only what the visitor makes of them. Montreal-based comic artist Paloma Dawkins has memories of compulsively exploring the Natural History Museum near her childhood home in Ottawa. In her new virtual reality game, the *Museum of Symmetry*, Dawkins invites the user to use her psychedelic, intergalactic museum space to travel through the colour wheel on their own terms.

"We wanted it to be purely experiential," says Dawkins, who worked with programmers and designers at the National Film Board and Casa Rara Studio to make the game happen. While so many games ask you to "master something," she "wanted everything in this space to be intuitive." The 20-minute game is on tour in Canada and beyond and is available to download on *STEAM* and *VIVE* now. Check out **mediaspace.nfb.ca/museumofsymmetry** to see more! (Jonathan Valelly)

ART HOLES

Creators diagram where they work

by Areeba Siddique

I'm an art student and illustrator based in Karachi, Pakistan. My illustrations usually deal with normalizing Muslim women on the internet (find me: **@ohareeba**). I sometimes write poetry out of rage, too. I am messy when it comes to my art, I cannot work without a pile of paper cut outs and my art supplies spread everywhere. This is why I like to set up my disposable workspace on the floor. It also enables me to work anywhere. Cleaning up afterwards is the hard part but at least I can have all the fun while I am working on my art pieces.

ZINESTER'S TOOLKIT

Zinester's toolkit is a column where creators share tools, tips, and tricks they use in their practice. In this edition, we adapted parts of the zine *Collagio*.

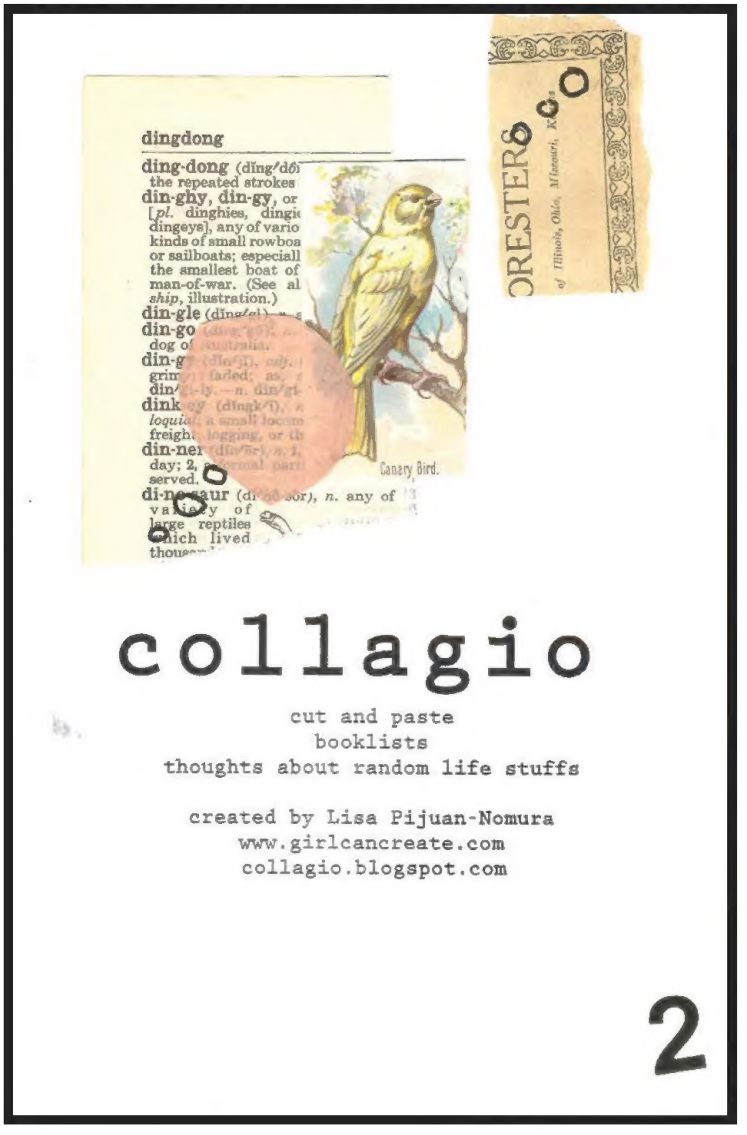
by Lisa Pijuan-Nomura.

I AM A COLLAGE ARTIST based in Hamilton, ON.

It all started about 28 years ago when I fell in love with an old postcard. It was a cheesy image of two people kissing on the streets of Paris. I wondered what the world of these two was like, and dreamed of a life of love, travel, and art.

After that, I started collecting postcards. Soon, I was going to all the antique markets and picking up old books at garage sales. I liked the look and feel of them, and I loved the inscriptions in the margins: "To Birdy, I love you dearly and always will. Frances, may you enjoy these delightful stories on your 16th birthday. Para mi amor, mi vida. 1942."

I couldn't stop thinking about those who had lived before me and written these messages. One day, I noticed that some of the pictures were falling apart and wondered what would happen if I used them for collage. For two years I spent about two hours a day cutting and pasting.



It was all going very well, and then suddenly things went bad. Two years ago, I was diagnosed with breast cancer. And that sucked. Like, it sucked a lot.

When you are spending all of your energy going through treatment and getting better, you have no energy left at the end of the day. So collage stopped for about eight months. When I came back to creating, I didn't quite know what to do. I wanted to lessen the pressure that I placed upon myself, so I started making what I call collage sketches. They are simple collages that I create in timed sessions. Just playing with paper. And slowly but surely I got back to creating.

Collagio is a zine about cutting and pasting, creativity, life and books. Each page has thoughts or quotes on them and they can be used as a prompt for your own paper playtimes.

Start with these simple prompts. 10 minutes a day.

How to Start a Collage

1. Start with an image that you love.

2. Pick three other elements.

3. Glue them down.

4. Have fun.

5. Listen to podcasts or your favourite music.

6. Once you are finished start again.

Collage #1

Late night thoughts make me giddy
Playing with paper
Abandoning all sorts of meaning
Just paper to paper.

Collage #3

Nothing.
Ever.
Makes
Sense.

Exposure Unit

Exposure Unit is a new column by Toronto-based zinester Rabeea Syed.

HELLO, *Broken Pencil* reader! And welcome to the magazine's newest regular column, Exposure Unit. I'm Rabeea Syed, a zinester and arts organizer based in Toronto. Let's start with a little bit about me. I'm currently studying graphic design with a completed minor in printmaking. I love making zines, and I am lucky enough to have been creating and partaking in zine culture for three years now. I became interested in making zines when I first decided to take a minor in printmaking. Soon I realized that there was this unexplored form of expression and I decided to pursue it.

Eventually, with my experience in graphic design as well as in printmaking, I was able to use this medium to explore my identity in a way that I had not previously realized was possible: through self-publishing. Being able to photograph and write about moments and experiences, and to compile them into something I felt captured the emotions surrounding my diasporic identity was brand new to me. Now, it is a key part of how I view art and its possibilities.

Of course, participating in zine culture hasn't always been a breeze. There are things that a creator has to be prepared for when presenting work in any environment.

For me, it was the fact that my work was directly related to my identity as a Muslim Pakistani-Canadian woman. This opens me up to unwanted comments and questions that I feel as though I have no choice but to answer, especially when displaying my work in-person at a zine fair or festival.

But those who ask these invasive questions would be likely to do so regardless of my art form. I would not consider it to be a setback that is specific to zine culture, but it's worth unpacking how it plays out in those particular contexts

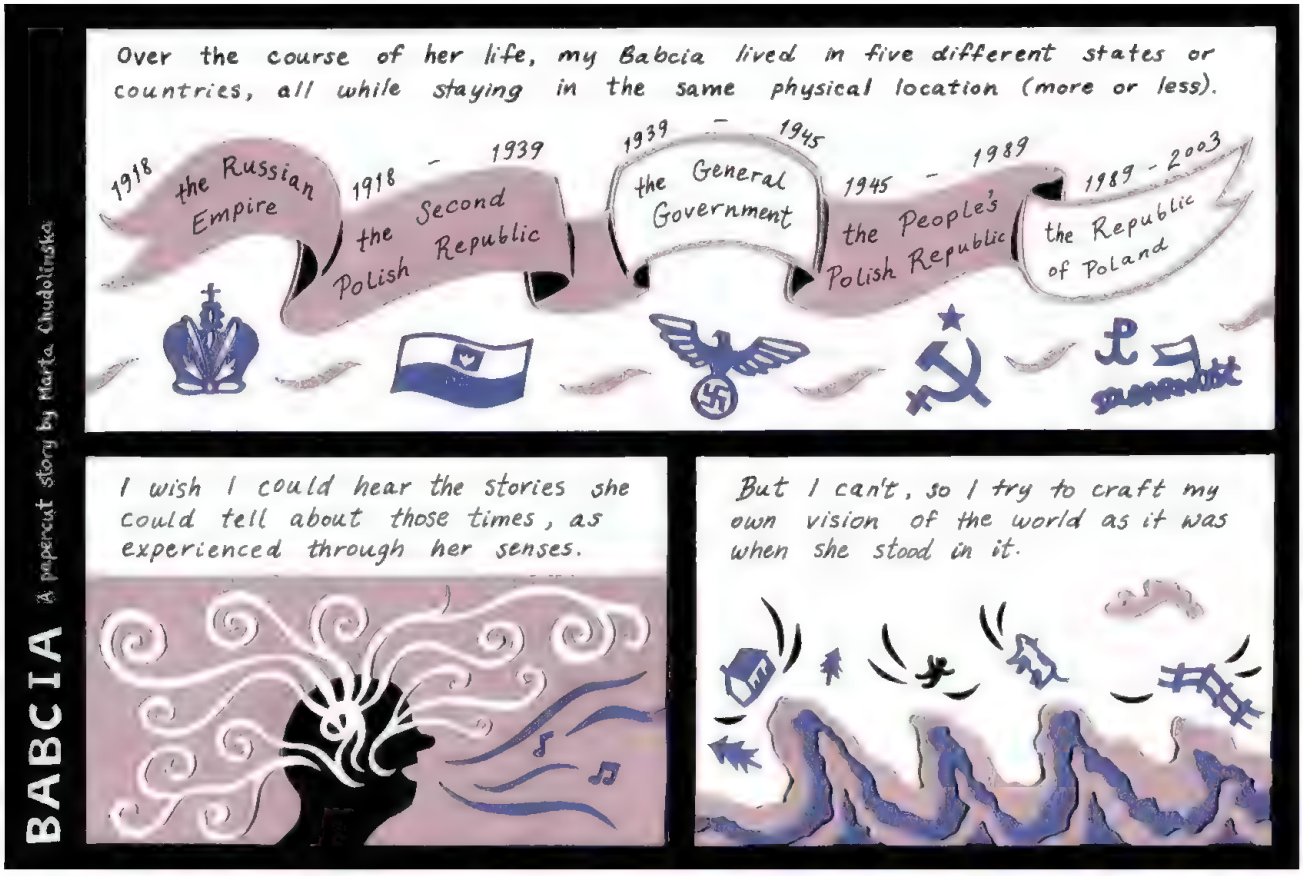
Zine making and the culture surrounding it is one of the most freeing things I've been able to do, and the most fulfilling community I've been able to be a part of.

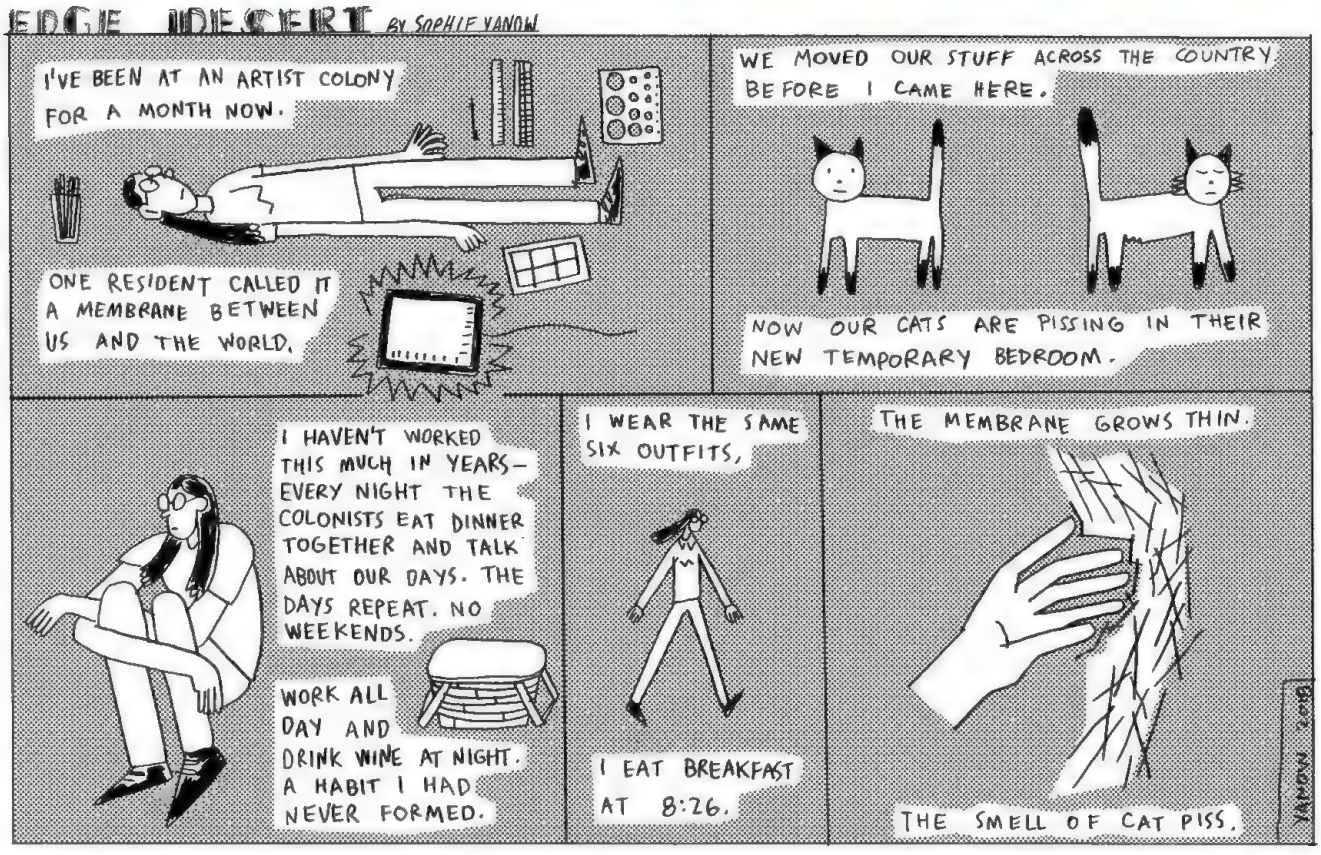
In this column space, I plan to elaborate on how zines are able to express so much in so many ways, yet remain an accessible form of media for all, in that they are easy to make and that there are no limitations on how they're made and who makes them. Thankfully, zines don't belong to any one person or any one group. They go beyond the traditional notions of artists and writers even, making them an extremely accessible form of representation for oneself.

I hope that in the issues to come, I can help open up conversations about the promises and pitfalls of zine culture, and the issues that affect us as zinesters making work, tabling at festivals, and sharing ourselves to the world. This can be as far ranging as how to make zine spaces more accessible, the challenge of collaborations in self-publishing, the politics of representation in DIY, and maybe even the big question of how zines fit into the digital media landscape. Really, anything that comes up in the life of a zinester!

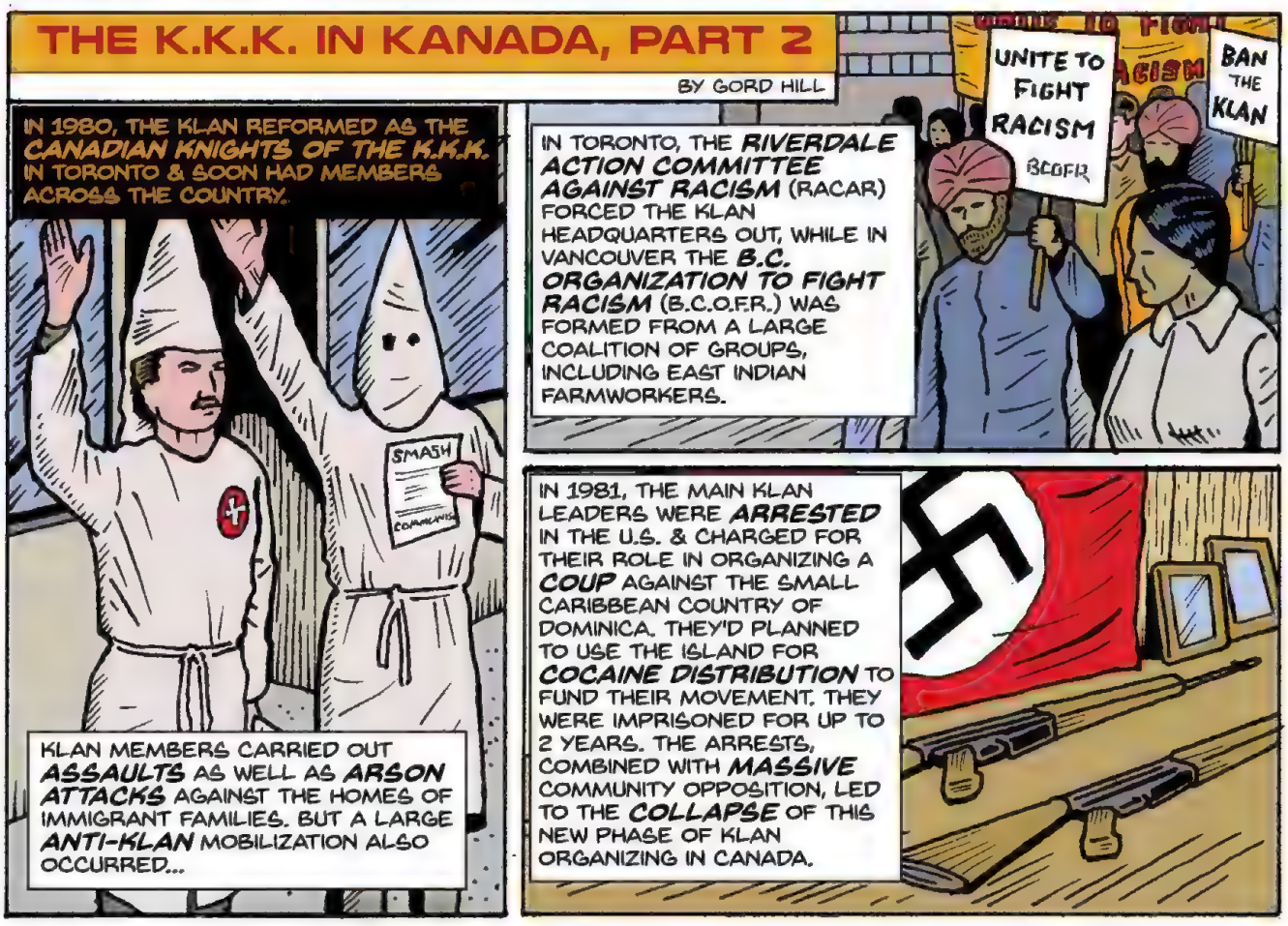
If there are topics you'd like to see covered, from a zinester's perspective, or any questions you have for me, please shoot me an email at **rabeea@brokenpencil.com**. Let's talk zines!

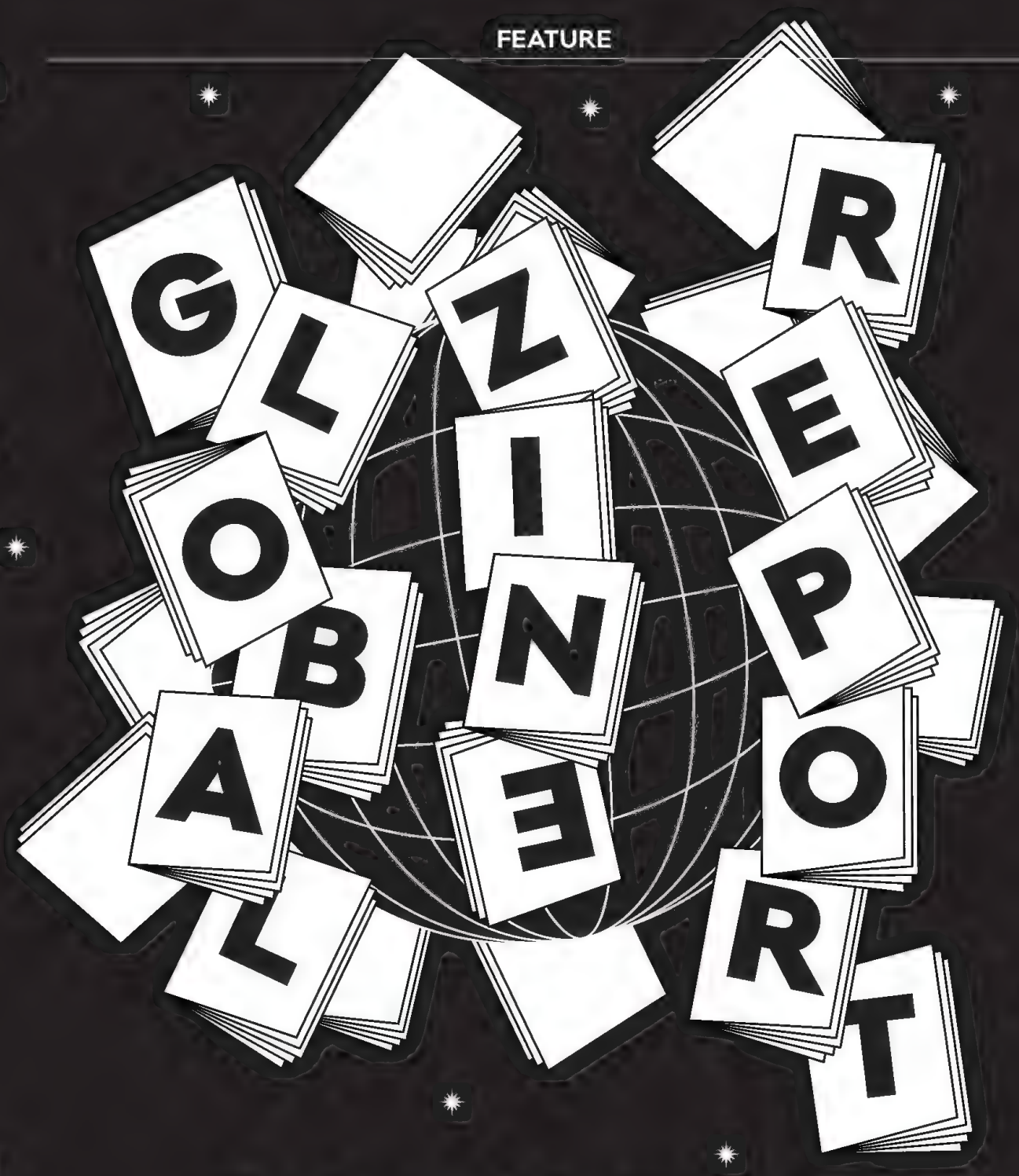
Burgomasterpiece Theatre by Cullen and Burgomaster


BABCIA
A papercut story by Marta Chudolińska
Over the course of her life, my Babcia lived in five different states or countries, all while staying in the same physical location (more or less).
1918 the Russian Empire
1918 - 1939 the Second Polish Republic
1939 - 1945 the General Government
1945 - 1989 the People's Polish Republic
1989 - 2003 the Republic of Poland
I wish I could hear the stories she could tell about those times, as experienced through her senses.
But I can't, so I try to craft my own vision of the world as it was when she stood in it.


EDGE DESERT by SOPHIE YANOW
I'VE BEEN AT AN ARTIST COLONY FOR A MONTH NOW.
ONE RESIDENT CALLED IT A MEMBRANE BETWEEN US AND THE WORLD.
WE MOVED OUR STUFF ACROSS THE COUNTRY BEFORE I CAME HERE.
NOW OUR CATS ARE PISSING IN THEIR NEW TEMPORARY BEDROOM.
I HAVEN'T WORKED THIS MUCH IN YEARS— EVERY NIGHT THE COLONISTS EAT DINNER TOGETHER AND TALK ABOUT OUR DAYS. THE DAYS REPEAT. NO WEEKENDS.
WORK ALL DAY AND DRINK WINE AT NIGHT. A HABIT I HAD NEVER FORMED.
I WEAR THE SAME SIX OUTFITS,
I EAT BREAKFAST AT 8:26.
THE MEMBRANE GROWS THIN.
THE SMELL OF CAT PISS.
YANOW 2018

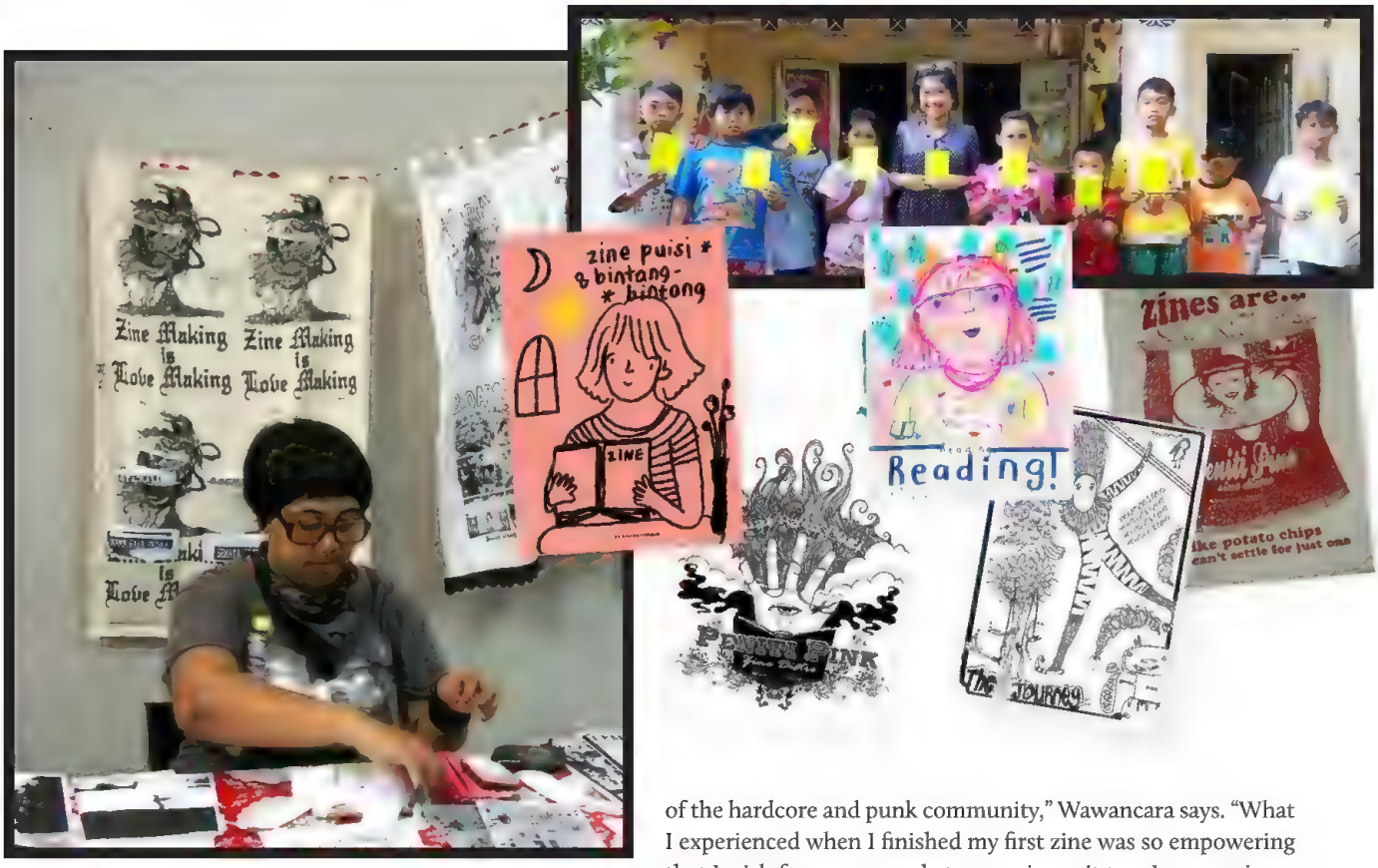
MAMA. I HAVE FOUND SOME THING.
THAT THING IS YOUR FATHER.
SHOW SOME RESPECT.
SORRY PAPA.
instagram.com/stevenkraan


THE K.K.K. IN KANADA, PART 2
BY GORD HILL
IN 1980, THE KLAN REFORMED AS THE CANADIAN KNIGHTS OF THE K.K.K. IN TORONTO & SOON HAD MEMBERS ACROSS THE COUNTRY.
SMASH
COMMUNISM
KLAN MEMBERS CARRIED OUT ASSAULTS AS WELL AS ARSON ATTACKS AGAINST THE HOMES OF IMMIGRANT FAMILIES. BUT A LARGE ANTI-KLAN MOBILIZATION ALSO OCCURRED...
IN TORONTO, THE RIVERDALE ACTION COMMITTEE AGAINST RACISM (RACAR) FORCED THE KLAN HEADQUARTERS OUT, WHILE IN VANCOUVER THE B.C. ORGANIZATION TO FIGHT RACISM (B.C.O.F.R.) WAS FORMED FROM A LARGE COALITION OF GROUPS, INCLUDING EAST INDIAN FARMWORKERS.
UNITE TO FIGHT RACISM
BCOFR
BAN THE KLAN
IN 1981, THE MAIN KLAN LEADERS WERE ARRESTED IN THE U.S. & CHARGED FOR THEIR ROLE IN ORGANIZING A COUP AGAINST THE SMALL CARIBBEAN COUNTRY OF DOMINICA. THEY'D PLANNED TO USE THE ISLAND FOR COCAINE DISTRIBUTION TO FUND THEIR MOVEMENT. THEY WERE IMPRISONED FOR UP TO 2 YEARS. THE ARRESTS, COMBINED WITH MASSIVE COMMUNITY OPPOSITION, LED TO THE COLLAPSE OF THIS NEW PHASE OF KLAN ORGANIZING IN CANADA.



The State of the Zine 2018

We hear from zinesters of all stripes here at *Broken Pencil*. From teenagers making their first mini comic to designers of high-art multiples. We also get mail pouring in from all over the world, bursting with zines, prints, and letters from zine enthusiasts. It made us ask: What's going on across the globe in the zine scene? What kind of similarities can we find in zine cultures across hemispheres, and how is each scene unique? While of course we couldn't do a full history of every local zine scene, we interviewed local zinesters and organizers in a bunch of different corners of the planet to get a snapshot of the cultures on the ground. A State of the Zine, if you will. Here are a few of our findings!



INDONESIA

When zines grew more popular in Indonesia, it wasn't just because they were an alternate creative medium. It was because, in a country where censorship is common and the distribution of information homogenous, zines offered Indonesians the freedom to access knowledge in new ways, says Annisa Rizkiana, a zinester based in Jakarta.

"Individuals and collectives that were active in the underground scene started to build embodied communities through zine-making as a form of resistance, open knowledge, and fun," Rizkiana says. "Nowadays, youth are also so aware of the possibilities they can access in order to build more supportive communities."

The beginning of Indonesia's zine scene has a familiar plot: political punk bands began circulating zines about gigs and other events. The focus was music, politics and anarchy, often in Xerox black and white, according to Ika Vantiani, an Indonesian zinester. That was until the 2000s, when zines grew more popular, turning to topics such as sex, art, and film.

"The most important change is thatthere were more women making zines that were not only talking about music and politics, but also other topics never talked about before," Vantiani says.

In 2001, Vantiani established her zine distro, Peniti Pink (Pink Safety Pin), where she organizes workshops and zine campaigns.

"The main goal in Peniti Pink is actually to bring zines out of the hardcore and punk community," Wawancara says. "What I experienced when I finished my first zine was so empowering that I wish for more people to experience it too. In an environment where we were told that 'media' means mainstream media, to be able to make our own is actually so important."

Vantiani isn't the only zinester to bring the zine ethos outside the underground scene. Rizkiana does zine workshops with children in rural areas. She started back in 2015, when she made zines with children about rivers and other places kids were living as a way to respond to environmental issues happening in Jakarta at the time. She started the workshops through Jakarta Biennale — an event of Indonesian contemporary arts — and Sanggar Anak Akar (a Jakarta-based alternative education model for poor children aged six to 12 years old).

"Zine-making is so liberating," Rizkiana says, but it isn't without its distribution and censorship challenges in Indonesia.

The government blocked Tumblr — a critical platform for so many zinesters worldwide — for the first time back in 2016. Its reasoning: the website was providing the citizens in Muslim-majority country with access to porn.

"Many zinesters here lost access to their digital archive," Rizkiana says. "We still try to sort of reclaim it back, but Tumblring zines may not be the same anymore."

CHECK OUT:

* **@autonica**
* **Bandung Zine Fest**
* **Jakarta Zine Fest**
* **molekulikan.tumblr.com**
* **Sangkakalam**
* **@vantiani**

Find La Maleta Fanzinera on Facebook to keep up with the Bogotá zine scene.

COLOMBIA

We asked Catalina aka Rapiña to write us a zine report about Bogotá, Colombia.

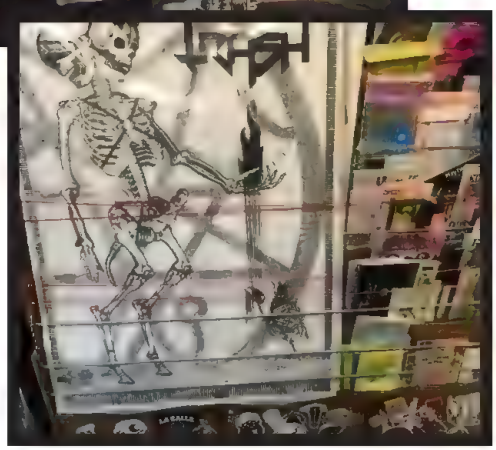
This is a zine report about what happens in these lands of the mango. For three years I've worked in La Maleta Fanzinera (which translates to "Fanzine Suitcase"), which has zines from all over Latin America. Thanks to this project, I've gotten to know more about the zine movement, and we are always getting new volumes in our collection.

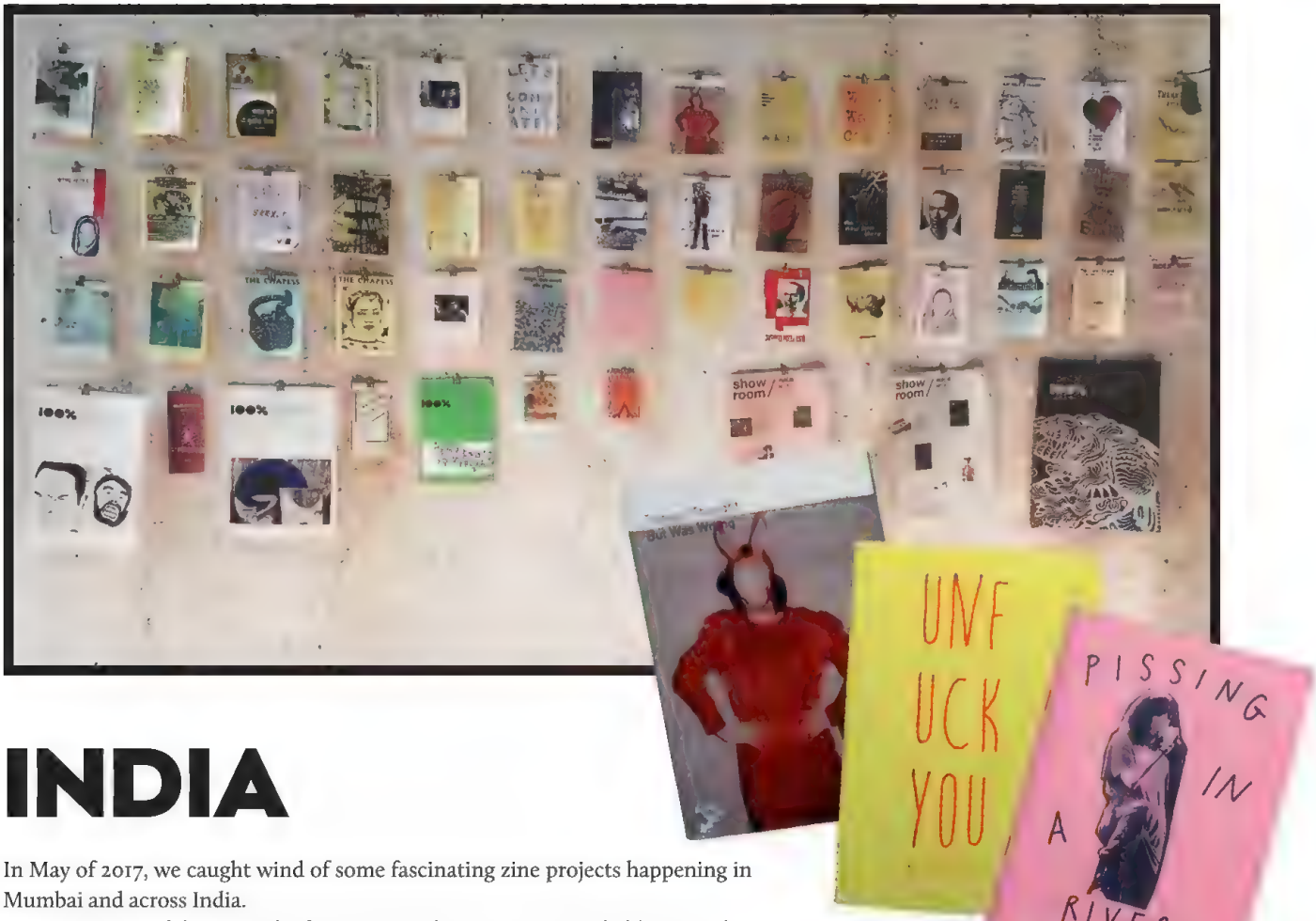
Bogotá is a great place for zines — we frequently have workshops, zine fairs, and small independent presses. Indie projects that use zines as a means of distribution, and a platform to find new ways of expressing their ideas, are coming to light.

There are plenty of great spaces to find fanzine treasures. One example is A la postre 101, a zine library that's open to the public and holds lots of '80s and '90s gems, along with a little café. The Distribuidora Libertaria Rojinegro is a distro you can find in one of Bogotá's old-school neighbourhoods, and it promotes the development and spread of free thinking. The Valija de Fuego bookstore is a punk home base. It has been open for a bit more than eight years, carries a super rich range of zines and has its own small press.

Amongst the workshops there is Colmillo, a risograph and serigrafía studio, where they illustrate cassettes and always release accompanying zines. Another place to find the movement would be the women who run the Histéricas collective, a group of empowered women who use zines as a medium to share knowledge about diversity and the social problems faced by women in Colombia.

This city is in continual movement — some projects end, and others gain strength in the indie scene. This is just the tip of the iceberg of cool zine projects in the country of mangos.





INDIA

In May of 2017, we caught wind of some fascinating zine projects happening in Mumbai and across India.

In January of that year, the first ever Bombay Zine Fest was held in Mumbai (Bombay), bringing together a large volume of self-published books and zines to the public in India.

We chatted with the same organizers as they went on to organize a travelling exhibition of zines called *You Deserve to DIY*. They call themselves Bombay Underground, and since we last chatted they've gone into full force zine organizing across the country.

This year, they hosted the second edition of their growing Bombay Zine Fest. They've also made good on their promise to set up a permanent zine library in Mumbai. But their show is on the road, most recently with the travelling Sister Library project, which brings artists books and zines around the country to open conversations about the representation of women in Indian literature and arts.

"There is a rich history of self-publishing in India. Various social justice movements often make easily distributable small publications," said Aqui Thami, who is from Darjeeling and has led the Sister Library project. "While there are various artists and designers making art books, which they sometimes even call zines, I think the first people in Bombay to actually make zines and hustle them in the streets was Bombay Underground."

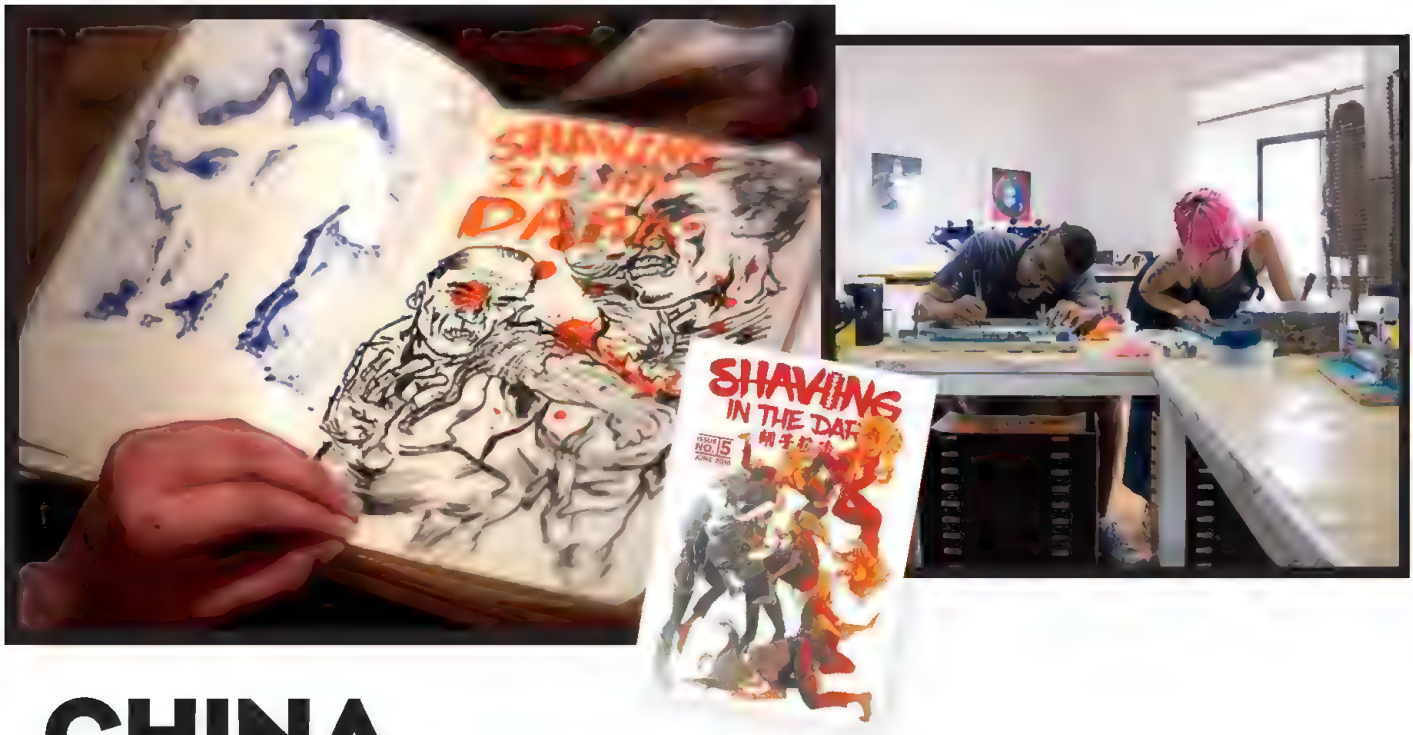
They've attracted plenty of attention with their projects, and while not everyone gets zines, the response has been generally positive. And zinesters have been sending their love.

"Zinemakers and distros all over the world lent us their support on social media and also sent us their zines," said Thami.

The collective also engages local communities through collaborative projects at the Dharavi Art Room. It's safe to say zine culture in India is in good hands!

CHECK OUT:

* **Bombay Underground**
* **Bombay Zine Fest**
* **Dharavi Art Room**
* **Sister Library**



CHINA

"Shanghai is really high-pressure, everyone's running after the money all the time," Zovi Weng told *Broken Pencil* over a noisy WhatsApp call earlier this summer. Loud conversations, car horns, and static confirmed his characterization of the bustling city. "Everyone is overworked, but I wanted to find a place to actually have fun."

Instead of finding it, Weng and his friend, Jar Mark Caplan, decided to make it on their own. They had already asked for submissions for their *Shaving in the Dark Zine*, an underground platform for comics. But when they started hosting Drink and Draw events for contributors to meet each other, they saw a community form.

"It kind of happened by happy accident," Weng laughs.

Getting a zine off the ground in Shanghai can be tough, Weng and Caplan told me. There are stern government regulations about publishing, and you have to be discreet.

"Doing anything indie in publishing is really difficult with the regulations," says Caplan, and getting an official publishing license is almost impossible. "But I feel it's gathering steam for sure... The demand is there."

Most of the zines they encounter in Shanghai are apolitical, for obvious reasons. Censorship in China is stern, and you have to play the game.

"We know what we cannot do," says Weng. "It's kind of in the air, this sort of self-censorship."

Rather than address issues head-on, zines and art about identity and personal stories projected into the realm of suggestion and fantasy are much more likely to survive than a straight-up punk or radical zine.

Yet, 1,300 kilometres north in Beijing, *Hole in the Wall Zine* gets away with a little bit more. The zine, started a bit over a year ago by friends Jinna Kaneko and Shui Wang, is meant to capture the large-scale, government enforced displacement that is rapidly transforming Beijing neighbourhoods.

"They evicted everyone who isn't a Beijing person," explains Jinna. "From little, small food sellers to cigarette sellers to people who sell flowers."

Jinna and Shui watched small businesses and underground spaces disappear, especially the hidden alleyways and courtyards known as *hutongs*. They decided to document them by interviewing the people affected and drawing portraits of them. They've found an audience for their project in the DIY and underground arts scene of Beijing.

"The underground music scene is huge. You've got punk, you've got rock, you've got hip-hop, you've got all these local artists — very down to earth people," describes Wang. The music scenes and other underground culture makers are linked primarily through groups on the social media platform WeChat. But while digital connections keep the scene thriving, Wang and Kaneko wanted to make something you could hold.

"As artists, we like tactile things, and we did start through offline publishing," says Wang. "We still all gather together and support each other. We like to see a live band or an art market."

"That also creates a connection, a human to human connection that we can't really get online," adds Kaneko.

As with so many zine cultures, self-publishing in Shanghai and Beijing seem to be connected to broader communities of underground media makers. While strict oversight from the state keeps people careful about publishing projects, an emerging zine scene makes space for subtlety.

CHECK OUT:

- **Hole in the Wall Zine**
- **Shaving in the Dark Zine**
- **Spittoon Literary Magazine**

AUSTRALIA

When Sticky Institute, a zine shop in Melbourne, opened its doors in 2001, it had 12 zines on the shelf. Seventeen years later, they've just stocked their 15,000th title.

"Which is pretty amazing because the shop is really small: it's only four metres by four metres big," says Luke Sinclair, one of the shop's coordinators.

"In '99, I remember having this conversation that zines would be gone by 2002. Completely the opposite has happened."

Likely the largest in the world, Australia's massive zine scene is growing — and with no sign of stopping. More zines are being made, fairs are expanding, and it's clear that big institutions see the value of zines enough to invest time and money.

Take the example of Sticky Institute. Their digs are dead centre in Melbourne, but they didn't pay rent for the first eight years because the building was owned by local council. "By the time we had to stand on our own two feet, we had a big enough audience and lots of zines moving through," Sinclair says. "[That's] the only reason we were able to survive."

The State Library of Victoria is another big supporter, buying one of each zine that's come through Sticky Institute to add to their collection, which is made up of thousands of zines.

"It's professionally curated by librarians," Sinclair says. "[It's] temperature-controlled, [zines are stores] in these tram track cupboards, and are stored in folders for the months that it was donated. So if you want to look at what zines looked like in August 1996, you can go to that cupboard, open it up, put your gloves on, and you can look at it."

Australia's zine scene took off in the late '90s, when a big zine fair, This is Not Art Festival, was started under the umbrella of a larger festival called the National Young Writers Festival.

"Within the next few years, people would travel from all around Australia to go to that zine fair," Sinclair says. "It brought everyone together."

Since then, a big change to the scene is the sheer number of zines being created. It can be challenging to keep up with, Sinclair says, and that's something that Emma Davidson agrees with.

Davidson is the co-founder of Sydney-based Take Care Zine Distro and has been involved in the scene since the '90s.

"After a few years, we stopped taking submissions," Davidson says. "We got a comparatively huge number of enquiries ... from people wanting to stock their zine, but very few orders."

More zines means a greater variety, but it's also created tension. There's been a surge in "designer," high-priced works in a world that was once dominated by cheaper cut-n-paste zines.

"There is confusion out there about what is a zine and what is an artist book," Davidson says. "I think a lot of the confusion actually stems — in Australia at least — from institutions like art galleries getting in on the zine scene. I think that changes the way people first encounter zines. Rather than finding zines firmly attached to a subculture, or as a subculture in themselves, zines are presented as this general medium of artistic self-expression."

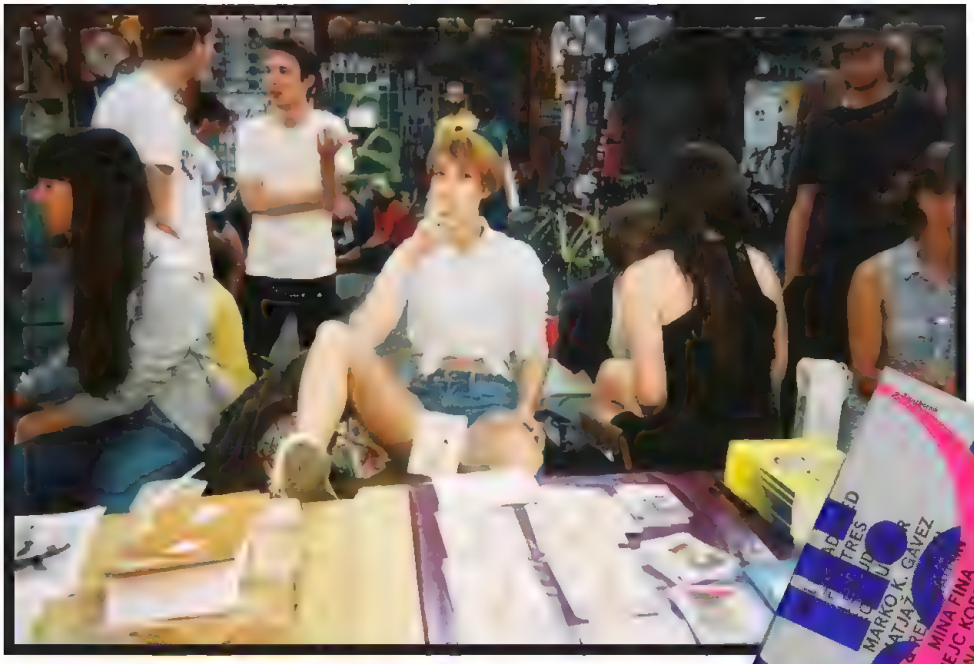
"It is a thing that is hard to grapple with," she says. "In the early days, we definitely turned down a lot of submissions on the grounds that they were bordering on not being zines. It raised the very frustrating question of how do you define what a zine even is, and who gets to decide?"

Though Davidson doesn't think the art world and zine world "are always mutually exclusive," poorly defined parameters causes confusions at zine fairs, where zinesters table alongside creators selling limited edition $50 art books.

Sinclair says he felt the same struggle in his own shop. "We had a lot of punks volunteering with us five years ago and they said nothing over $10 ... It used to cause real tensions in the shop. People would not like that. They would want that $30 glossy thing."

For a zine scene as massive as Australia's, growing pains are understandable. But with such dedicated groups like Sticky Institute and Take Care Zine Distro in the community, it's bound to work through this uncharted territory.

CHECK OUT:
* **Sticky Institute**
* **Take Care Zine Distro**



CHECK OUT:
* **Dobra Vaga**
* **Selmica1992**
* **Tea Hvala**
* **Stripburger**
* **Zine Vitrine**

SLOVENIA

This small, pastoral post-Soviet country is known for its quiet beauty and delicious wines. But a little poking around and you'll find that, like anywhere, Slovenia's cultural history is rich with complexity, community and, of course, a rebellious underground. Yet, even we weren't prepared for how deep its zine history is! *Stripburger*, an underground comix zine, began in 1992 and continues on today.

"We were lucky to survive that long," said editor Katerina Mirovic. "The whole story is actually about ... struggle to get readers. This is quite the problem because Slovenia is really small, it's two million people, and we speak Slovenian, which no one else in the world speaks."

While many of Slovenia's early punk scene zines, like *Rock Vibe and Psst...*, haven't survived (though they have been well documented), *Stripburger* has pushed through into a new era of zines and has established itself as a key force in bringing alternative comics into more traditional artist's spaces, as well as to youth and students.

"In Slovenia, we are also facing a boom of zines and self-publishing," said Lara Plavcak, a scholar and curator who helped edit a catalogue of Slovenian zines in 2017 and who started the Zine Vitrine zine library. "The difference is in clearer orientation towards the design, illustration, drawings, photography, and similar works of art and artistic value."

Indeed, Mirovic echoes that. While the zines from the era of *Stripburger*'s inception were more community projects or regular, serial fanzines, today's publications are "more about showing more personal, more intimate work ... In comics, you can see lots of these designer comics with lots of colours."

Plavcak also notes that, while there is an increasing academic interest in zines, and a turn towards design, they haven't necessarily given up the original zine ethos.

"Most visible zine authors are, in general, academically educated artists, but the majority of them got to know zines through punk or skate subcultures, of which they were or are part of," she told *Broken Pencil*, later adding, "The prevailing values remain creativity, independence, non-profitability, networking and communication."

CHECK OUT:
* **Alphabet Zoo**
* **ANY BODY ZINE**
* **Artwolfe**
* **The Bubblegum Club**
* **Cape Town Zine Project**
* **Gethering**
* **Keletketla! Library**
* **Lephephe Print**
* **Pxssy on a Plinth**
* **Title in Transgression**
* **Tow Aways Zine**

SOUTH AFRICA

Zines have always been a small but active subculture in Southern Africa, and South Africa in particular. DIY publications, zine fairs, libraries, and festivals have popped up sporadically in Durban, Johannesburg, and Cape Town. But it's certainly still underground.

"The challenges we face in South Africa are the lack of awareness, value and education about self-publishing/publications," said the members of Alphabet Zoo, a zine collective based in Johannesburg. "Your average South African will not pick up or buy a zine thinking its a brochure or a catalogue of some sort."

Alphabet Zoo has been around since 2012. What started as a group of eight printmaking students became a project of two, Minenkulu Ngoyi and Isaac Savale. Their zines are often striking, highly visual projects, and they're a huge force supporting the zine scene in South Africa. Check out their Tumblr page and you'll find links to zines talking back to legacies of colonialism and racism, high concept art zines, streetwear projects, and more. And while they describe challenges around an awareness of zines, they also have noticed that the word is spreading.

"We've noticed that the zine culture has grown quite [a lot] since 2014, especially in Johannesburg," said Ngoyi. "There is a whole new fast growing community of zinesters."

In recent years, artists from other disciplines have been taking up zines to tell their own stories. Illana Wellman, who works under the moniker Lani Spice, has been a part of that wave. A photographer by trade, discovering the possibility of lo-fi, self-propelled photo zines was a game changer. Her zine, *Tow Aways*, became a bit of a hit, and eventually she became one of the go-to people for zine culture in Johannesburg.

"I've always actually had this itch to create a platform, because there is no real platform here in South Africa, there is no online store dedicated to zines and there is no real store, like a physical space that was dedicated to zines only," she describes. Soon, she was tabling her own zines and her friends' zines at art festivals like Sunday Editions and even high-end galleries.

Amongst the other zines that span disciplines is the aptly titled *ANY BODY ZINE*. The zine was started by members of a dance community, of all things, to create a publication that was by and for artists working in the medium.

"Film and fine arts have a large body of texts or literature supporting them, but it's not so common with the performing arts to find a kind of library or lineage of texts behind that," said Nicola van Straaten, one of the zine's editors. "Just doing it ourselves felt like the most immediate way to slightly change that."

Van Straaten, who was also part of the Namibia-based zine *Artwolfe*, says that the interplay between the process of making a DIY publication and the content within gives it a special intrigue.

"There a is a really nice sort of flow between these small paper objects that can hold information, but also the body holds so much information, and the exchange between the two," she explains.

Of course, as artists from different experiences, disciplines, and means come into the community, it too has to grow.

"There is this sort of performing arts community that is interested in engaging with the content. And then there is this whole other community, which is the zine-making community, who are also obviously interested in new publications that crop up," says van Straaten.

She adds, "The zine community, at least from what I found, is really welcoming." bp

THE NEW NOIR

TERMINAL CITY AT THE HEART OF A GENRE'S RENAISSANCE

VANCOUVER, CITY OF GLASS, shining light on the Pacific surrounded by the fringes of the Rocky Mountains and lush northwest rainforest islands. It's one of the most beautiful places in the world. It's also ground zero for the emergent revival of small press noir. Noir in gorgeous, pastoral Vancouver? It's not as incongruous as you might think, explains John Belshaw, historian and co-author of *Terminal City Noir*, a photographic chronicle of the so-called Terminal City's past as a city of graft, gangs, and grifters.

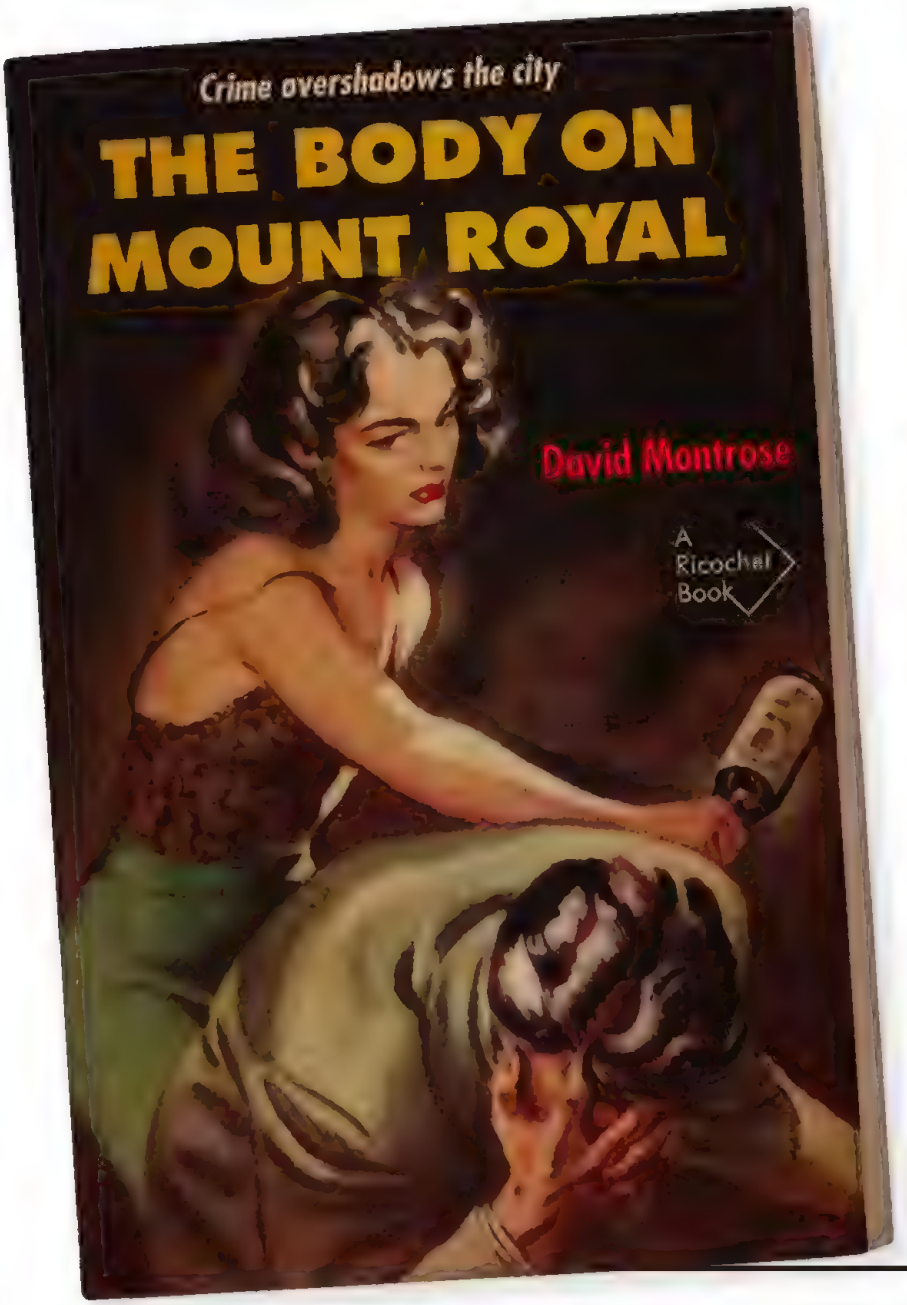
"There's the opioid and mental health crises in the Downtown Eastside, and the sense that the old city core is a place of rotting flesh at Vancouver's very heart. There's a general sense that politicians and planners are in the pocket of developers. Money laundering — like the organized sex trade, and illicit liquor [redacted] — has been taking place at industrial scales under the nose of the VPD [Vancouver Police Department] and political elites. There has even been a resurgence in anti-Chinese feeling associated with off-shore condo sales. And there's a sense, too, that elites have been profiting from all of this," Belshaw says bluntly.

Photography by Lindsay Duncan

Brian Busby, editor of Montreal-based Ricochet Books, a Véhicule Press series that recovers and reprints vintage Canadian noir from the '40s and '50s with titles like *Blondes Are My Trouble* and *The Crime on Cotes Des Neiges*, makes a similar point. Noir often exposes "an underside that is typically absent in Canadian literature. I won't say that reading noir is akin to slumming, but it rights an imbalance." According to Busby, postwar Anglo Canadian writing, set in Montreal and elsewhere, tended to set its plots amongst the city's wealthy. Only the noir novels of the time effectively captured the dingy truth of Montreal's brothels, clubs, and seedy nightlife.

"William Weintraub documented these years in *City Unique: Montreal Days and Nights of the 1940s and 1950s*, but in fiction, it exists only in the noir paperbacks of Brian Moore, David Montrose, Douglas Sanderson, and a handful of others," Busby says.

Indeed, the noir renaissance is acute in Vancouver, but criminality, class war and exploitation are everywhere, and the genre is re-emergent elsewhere. In addition to Akashic's Vancouver noir, upcoming small press books billed as noir include Michigan-based Vern Smith's *The Green Ghetto* (Run Amok Books), A. G. Pasquella's Toronto set noir thriller, *Yard Dog* (Dundurn Press) and Lisa de Nikolits' *Rotten Peaches* (Inanna Publications). Additionally, the recent past has no shortage of noir small press anthologies, including several from Toronto press Exile Editions such as 2015's *The Exile Book of New Canadian Noir.*



"Noir feeds off corruption, greed, and sundry fuckery that drives the absurd," explains Michigan-based Vern Smith. "And where are we, as a culture? Well, here in the US, we have a former game show host as president. He wants to arm teachers with guns. Dennis Rodman is fast becoming the go-to consultant on international relations. Shootings are an everyday thing. Not 20 minutes from where I live, 40 or so people are getting shot a week, only you're not supposed to talk about it. If all that wasn't bad enough, the Nazis are back."

In noir, the cause of ruin is not the crime nor the character; it is society itself. Thus, the world depicted by noir finds new ways to mirror our 21st-century reality. Characters are hopeless, the settings are gloomy and the themes, dismal. And so, it's no surprise that writers — and readers — are turning to the new noir. As Smith puts it, it's hard to remember a time "when we've been so desperately divided, or a time that we acted so viscerally and literally truculent; and that makes for a noir world."

But noir is not without its critics. Traditionally, the genre was male-dominated and misogynistic, with women serving as little more than objects or side characters. Does the new noir represent a return to old clichés? Are these primarily texts in which failed white men flex their muscles in mirrors reflecting back their sallow faces, empty bottles, and defeated womenfolk?

"In older noir stories, women characters usually fall into three categories: the Femme Fatale, the Damsel in Distress and the Dead Body. I have definitely noticed an attempt in contemporary noir to address these inequalities and make female characters, even if they're not the protagonists, more well-rounded and more essential to the plot," says first-time noir author, Toronto's A.G. Pasquella. In 2016, former *Broken Pencil* fiction editor Pasquella and Terri Favro edited *PAC'N HEAT: A Noir Homage to Ms. Pac-Man*. The book consisted of submissions from writers that approached Ms. Pac-Man as a noir protagonist.

Noir author and enthusiast Lisa de Nikolits also discusses potential mutations of the genre. Last year, she ran *Sixteen Shades of*

Noir, a series that attempted to highlight noir's bleed into other genres. The columns included noir subgenres ranging from revenge noir, Catholic noir, graphic noir, and even comedic noir.

"I was trying to demonstrate that aspects of noir are being used in brilliant ways in all kinds of fiction in order to add more to the stories, to layer the characters not only in darkness or satire or comedy, but in noir, that almost-elusive, most elegant time bomb of destruction," de Nikolits says.

The rise of modern noir has also meant the arrival of what might soon qualify as newly important subgenres, if they don't already — Indigenous noir, Black noir, queer noir are all appearing both in the small press and indie arts communities.

In 2017, a team of Indigenous female developers based out of Hamilton, Ontario, created a noir video game. The company, Achimostawinan Games, produced *Purity & Decay*, a detective game that not only confronts the male-dominated game industry, but also the testosterone-burdened world of noir. Billed as a "visual cyber-noir novel" the game asks, "Who killed Merriam LaPensee?" Even as that question drives the plot forward, *Purity & Decay* also contemplates another, deeper, inquiry: What does an Indigenous future look like seven generations from now?

Noir graphic novels and comics have also been subverting the traditionally white genre. *Incognegro*, written by Mat Johnson and illustrated by Warren Pleece, was originally published in 2008 and republished last year by Dark Horse Comics. It tells the story of Zane Pinchback, an African-American writer in the 1920s. Pinchback passes for white and reports on lynchings in the Deep South. Another book, set in the time of the Harlem Renaissance, is in the works.

Likewise, 2016 gave us *Black Mumba,* an anthology short stories set in Mumbai self-published by graphic novelist Ram Venkatesan. It's crime noir but, as the online promo text explains, "there are no real criminals in *Black Mumba*. The city itself is the quarry and the bleak, weird and yet magical nature of life on its streets is at the heart of the stories."

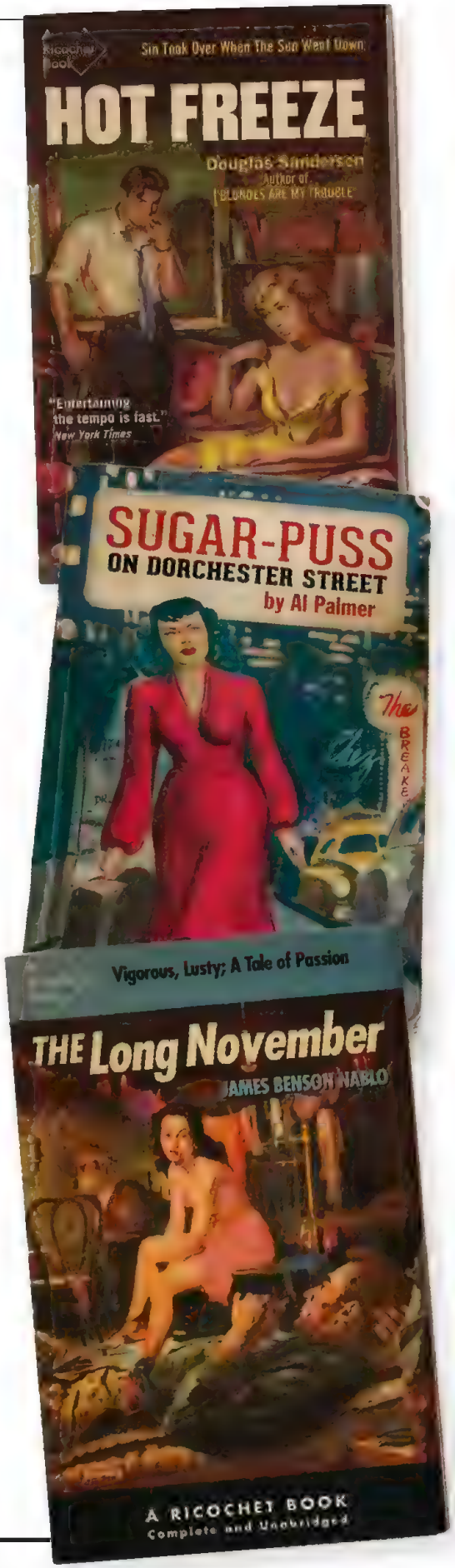
Perhaps that's the key to noir's resurgent appeal, especially in the small press and indie arts world. There are no criminals per se, no heroes and, ultimately, no winners. It's a genre released from the expectations of success and striving, a genre devoid of morality, a nihilist comment on how power and politics fail us. In a sense, noir is a genre that tricks readers into exploring sensitive topics like poverty, addiction, corruption, and gentrification that they may otherwise shy away from.

Says SG Wong, "The exploration happens, as with any meaningful literature, when the reader is drawn into the characters' conundrums and moral ambiguities. Real life is far from straightforward. When noir best explores these topics, I think it's using the grit and darkness of its tropes to build a mirror that transforms into a magnifying glass." Or, as Sam Wiebe puts it, "Bad shit happening to people much like ourselves. It's about the dark things we instinctively know, but choose to ignore — until they catch up with us."

What comes next for the noir indie culture resurgence is up to this generation of writers and the presses that work with them. Lisa de Nikolits sees the ongoing return of classic noir spilling into every possible genre. Vancouver's Belshaw is more pessimistic. He's concerned that we might soon reach peak noir, and come to see noir as an empty marketing term.

"About eight years ago, Diane Purvey and I coined the phrase 'noir Vancouver'. Now I hear people using that term as though it's a pair of well-worn shoes. I'd be happier about that if noir-scale slipperiness wasn't back in style," Belshaw says.

Whatever shape noir takes in the future, it seems that a genre bathing in pathos, deception, gloom, and hopelessness is quickly becoming a favourite in a supposedly peaceful country of bucolic countryside and well organized, low crime cities. This kind of stark incongruity makes it clear that society is looking for some sort of response to a looming disarray many sense but cannot quite articulate. The new noir gives us a momentarily safe way to consider the late capitalist chaos — coming for some, already arrived for others.



Excerpt from

THE BODY ON MOUNT ROYAL

by David Montrose

Originally published in 1953. Republished in the Véhicule Press Ricochet series edited by Brian Busby.

THE TRAFALGAR. For me, it's as much a part of Montreal as the great electric cross atop Mount Royal. It's a little Sherbrooke Street hotel with a small, dark bar. All the waiters have worked in the bar at least fifteen years, and they all know me well enough to call me by name. Not that I'm a bar-snob, but it's nice to know that if you take one over the nine you'll be put to bed in a room upstairs, not in the gutter with a curbstone for a pillow.

I came to the Trafalgar and walked into the bar, and I was too late. There were three youngish women resting their feet after buying out Holt Renfrew, cooling their tongues with creme-de-menthe frappes. There were several parties of two or three men. There was one tired young businessman, sitting alone, watching me as I came in. But there was no MacArnold.

Bob, the youngest and shortest of the waiters, padded up to me. "Afternoon, Mr. Teed," he said.

"I was supposed to meet Allan MacArnold here," I told him.

Bob started to say, "Mr. MacArnold is—" But the tired young man had hoisted himself to his feet, and interrupted.

"MacArnold's over here," he said. "He got a little tired and he's resting. I'm Jimmy Montgomery. We were waiting for you."

A tired young businessman, I'd called him. He was slim, wiry, three inches shorter than my own six feet, and I'd say about 35 years old. His hair was wiry as he was, strong sandy hair that oscillated back over his skull in a series of perfectly uniform waves. But I don't mean he was a pretty boy. He had a lean and spare face with a strong jutting jaw and narrow, straight nose. His pale blue eyes were wideset under light brows, and his skin was mottled with freckles. He had a small white scar in his upper lip and another above one eye, not disfiguring marks but enough to suggest he might be a very competent barroom fighter if aroused.

I guess I stared at him a little too long, because he grinned a rather sheepish grin and said, "Yeah, that's right. I'm *that* Jimmy Montgomery."

"What Jimmy Montgomery?"

"I found a body on top of Mount Royal this morning. I thought maybe you'd read it in the papers."

"Oh, sure," I grinned back. "I remember. What I liked best was it didn't spoil your breakfast."

"The hell it didn't."

"That's what the paper said."

"Reporters have to say something." He shrugged. "Like that story about me taking a walk on the mountain every morning. Hell, I'd been out on an all-night toot and walked home across the mountain to sober up. I didn't want them to print that, so I told them to use their imagination."

"I think I'm going to like you," I said candidly. "Tell me, where's MacArnold?"

Montgomery pointed. There was a semi-circular sofa beside the chair he'd been sitting in. It was a substantial, high-backed affair and I had to walk right up to it to see that there was anyone in it.

In the semi-circular sofa was a semi-circular MacArnold. He was laid out neatly, following the contour of the furniture, like a tired sickle lying on a shelf. He was snoring.

MacArnold, the prize of the morning *Clarion*, was a man who always wore a tweed jacket which never matched the tweed pants he always wore. He claimed it was impossible to keep a press in these tweeds, and his appearance gave no reason to doubt his word. MacArnold was a black Scotsman, with skin so thick and heavily pigmented doctors always thought him anaemic, and jet hair, smooth and a bit thin on his wide skull. He had heavy lips that might be called sensuous unless you knew the thing they most loved to touch was the rim of a glass.

I shook his bony shoulder. "Hey, wake up!"

No response. Bob, the waiter, was circling around with an expression half between amusement and disapproval. "Get me a tall glass of ice water, Bob," I said grimly.

MacArnold opened one eye wide. "No, you don't," he muttered. He dropped his lank legs to the floor and stretched his convex spinal column back to concave. He looked at me balefully. He said, "And I asked you here to do you a favor."

"And I'm doing you a favor," I pointed out. "I'm getting worried about you. I think I'll read you the lesson right now."

Montgomery was either a sensitive type, or he felt a bit responsible for getting MacArnold drunk so early in the day. He colored slightly and edged off on a stroll that took him to the men's room.

AROUND THE (PRINTING) BLOCK

by Anisa Rawhani

Interview with Hope Amico of Gutwrench Press
Letterpress printer based out of New Orleans, Louisiana

I MET HOPE AMICO this past June at a massive librarians' conference (the ALA) in New Orleans. We were tabling in the Zine Pavilion — me for *Broken Pencil* and Hope for Gutwrench Press, which she founded in 2008.

Gutwrench Press produces zines, hand-bound books and, my personal favourite, the Keep Writing Project, a monthly interactive postcard subscription (I'm two months in and loving it).

Hope started the Keep Writing Project "as a way to keep in touch with friends and penpals that grew to a subscriber list of 200, from many states and countries." Each month, she collaborates with an artist to design a letterpress card comprised of two detachable postcards: one is a letterpress print you keep, the second poses a thought-provoking prompt Subscribers respond to the prompt each month and mail the second postcard back to Hope to exhibit. She just finished preparing her 112th postcard, and the project's 10-year anniversary is around the corner. It's clear Hope's been around the (printing) block. So, I asked her to share some of the basics to catch me up.

What exactly is letterpress printing?
Traditionally that means using moveable type to set every letter of your text, just like Gutenberg did for the first printed Bible. Letterpress printing is a kind of relief printing — there is some kind of image and the ink is rolled across the top — a stamp is relief printing! So are wood cuts and linoleum.

What's your process?
I rely mostly on computer images and text that I manipulate, and then order a hard polymer plate to be made of my design from a company in California called Crown Flexo. Then I print using the plate.

What other techniques do you use?
I've also used a risograph machine — which is like a copier crossed with a silkscreen. Screens are burned in the copier, which allow toner through that corresponds to your image. Riso printing can be done in a variety of colours, though generally one colour at a time.

What's your advice to zinesters who want to branch out from, say, cut-and-paste techniques?
Be intentional with your print choices. Use the medium that is suited to what you want to accomplish and is reasonably affordable!

I definitely think there is a place for printing in zine-making. There are low-tech ways of silkscreening using stencils. What I've loved about zine culture is making something beautiful in the most affordable, accessible way possible. You can still photocopy the insides and create a printed cover

I remember during your talk at the Zine Pavilion you told this story about a snafu with a printer and an airport. What happened?
In 2012, I studied abroad for six months, but I did not want to abandon the Keep Writing Project. I bought a gocco printer — a Japanese all-in-one printer that works kind of like silkscreen and kind of like a stamp. The screens can be exposed with a flashbulb, from an image drawn in sharpie. Very low-tech and self-contained. I figured each month I could draw one screen and print the postcards I needed.

When I got to the New Orleans airport I checked two bags and carried on my bag with the printer. It had everything I needed to print — very flammable oil-based ink, flash bulbs and batteries. When I got to security, I quickly realized the error of my ways: I was bringing something explosive onto a plane! They swiped everything I had, and asked me a million questions. I am lucky and they let me go, and I barely caught my plane. bp

gutwrenchpress.com/subscribe
keepwritingpostcards.tumblr.com

In each issue, Broken Pencil *asks an artist to curate Folio — a section highlighting creators working in unexpected media and materials. This edition is curated by Whess Harman.*

Whess Harman's ongoing series of work, *Potlatch Punk*, uses contemporary beadworking to engage with conversations about urban Indigenous identities and visibility — as well as to refute expected representations and colonial measures of authenticity. The jackets blend together DIY approaches and traditional materials. In this manifestation, they explore and pay homage to the wealth of dedication, time and love required in the tradition of beadwork. This patient richness runs so contrary to modern fast and easily reproducible fashion. Each jacket is approached as a method of continual adaptation and portraiture. It is as much about the creation of each work as it is about the time spent with it, in a spirit of humble and engaged study, without the pursuit of perfection.

OUR BLOO
RUNS THE
RIDDER

Whess Harman is a mixed race, trans/non-binary/2SQ artist from the Carrier Wit'at Nation. They currently live and create as an uninvited but grateful guest on the ancestral territories of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Waututh Nations.

ZINES

Are You My Home?

Zine, Rachel Jackson, 16 pgs, rjacksl@gmail.com

There are houses and there are homes. There are also RVs, cabins, rooms above motorcycle shops and friends' basements. These are a few of the places where Rachel Jackson and her siblings spent time growing up, and hanging with their father on weekends. *Are You My Home?* is a memoir (sort of), but it's also a series of questions and statements. Displacement and restlessness are central themes as Jackson uses words mushed up with some great drawings and collages to tell her tale. The tone is not especially sad. Instead, there are tinges of confusion, uncertainty, and realizations about her personal reality. In that sense, you could argue this is a something of a coming-of-age story. She touches on university and wanting to ditch campus, permanently or semi-permanently. Friendship also comes up a few times and, more than anything, it would seem that Jackson is looking for a place to be, paired with people who need or want something similar. Rachel shares plenty in a few short pages and the artwork alone is evocative enough to create tone, presence, and meaning. It's a relatable story, and one shared bravely. (Cam Gordon)

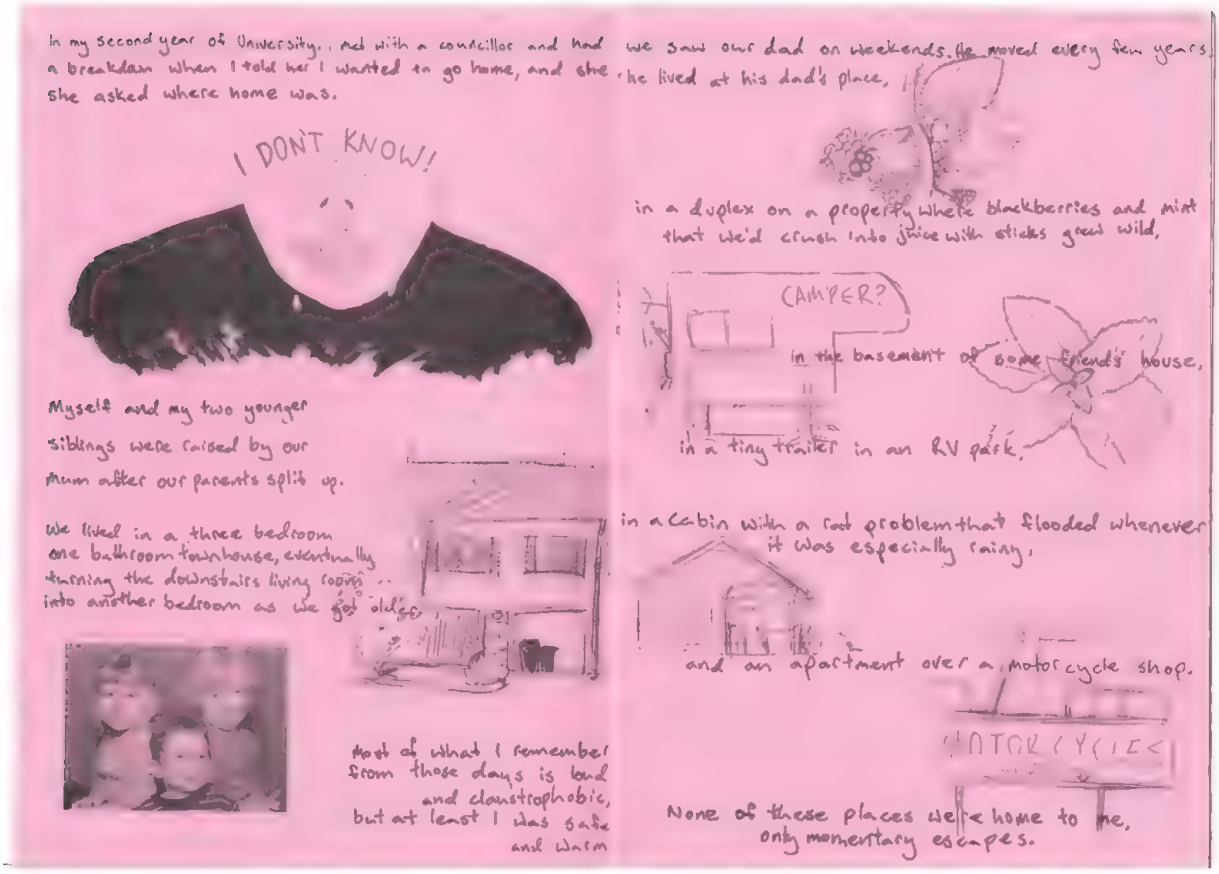
Boston Review

Zine, JM Francheteau, 14 pgs, @franchetoast

This *Boston Review* is definitely not the quarterly literary and political journal that

EXCERPT

FROM **Are You My Home?** BY **Rachel Jackson**


In my second year of University, met with a councillor and had a breakdown when I told her I wanted to go home, and she she asked where home was.
I DON'T KNOW!
Myself and my two younger siblings were raised by our mum after our parents split up.
We lived in a three bedroom one bathroom townhouse, eventually turning the downstairs living room into another bedroom as we got older.
Most of what I remember from those days is loud and claustrophobic, but at least I was safe and warm
we saw our dad on weekends. He moved every few years, he lived at his dad's place,
in a duplex on a property where blackberries and mint that we'd crush into juice with sticks grew wild,
CAMPER?
in the basement of some friend's house,
in a tiny trailer in an RV park,
in a cabin with a real problem that flooded whenever it was especially rainy,
and an apartment over a motorcycle shop.
MOTORCYCLES
None of these places were home to me, only momentary escapes.

has been published since 1975. It is a poetic, dejected, infatuated letter by JM Francheteau (of the zine *Night Shift* and many other titles), written to the city herself after what sounds like a bummer stop on a reading tour.

In a quarter-size zine with text blocks cut and pasted onto images of the author and company in and around Boston, Francheteau lays it out. His words are frustrated, but funny, and unpretentious as far as poetry goes. He frames Boston as a "half-listening bartender." Having come expectantly for the poetry reading, Francheteau explains what he's witnessed: clean streets, newsletters with racist editorials, and a $75 parking ticket, but little by way of reciprocation from the fair Cradle of Liberty. Perhaps it's Francheteau's late arrival to the reading, or that hardly anyone was there, or that the parking ticket capped off all the disappointment, but I'm reminded of my own most memorable touring bust. It was a portentous van breakdown in Marion, Indiana, sending the band and I home, tails betwixt legs, tour cancelled, and deep wounds to tend. It is not easy for the travelling artist to drag themselves into a town, offer their soul, and have the city and circumstance pay no heed. But that's essentially the gig we sign up for. Francheteau's poetic purge of unrequited loose ends is something far more productive than I was able to conjure from my experience. (Joshua Barton)

Get Off

Zine, Alexandra Mae Jones, thevologgingnook.tumblr.com

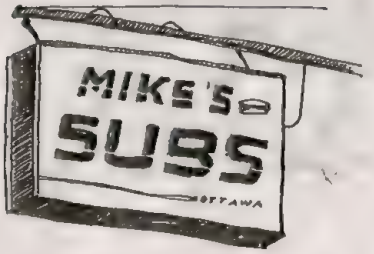
Alexandra Mae Jones' zine chronicles the frustrations and fears of first learning how to masturbate as a person with a vagina. With brothers and boys around her who

EXCERPT

FROM **The Hamilton Sub Register** BY **Ben Needham** AND **Tara Bursey**

Atlantic Submarine
Address: 927 King Street East (Gibson)
Category: Local Chain, Canadian-Style

Ultra garbage. Pure, Canadian-style submarines, with narrow, white, hotdog-like buns, mayo, nearly white iceberg lettuce, and frightening mystery meat-type cold cuts. Kind of a seedy place.
I've messed with the King and Sherman location, but not the others. A highlight includes the bleached-out old posters of Greece, and a buxom woman eating a gyro.



Mike's Subs
Address: 122 Ottawa Street North (Crown Point)
Category: Local Chain

Atlantic Subs' competition, it's very similar overall. I've tried the Ottawa Street location, and can't speak about the others. Lettuce is shredded finely, and oddly dry. One visit was more than enough.

reviewed on page 31

tout their ability to "get off" so frequently that one of their arms is stronger than the other, she continues to try. Yet, she only finds herself steeped in a gross, unresolved feeling. *Get Off* is illustrated with a collage of images of hands and human figures, adding a dreamy and quick element that invites readers to breeze through her short paragraphs about masturbation. This zine offers an honest and succinct story about one process of growing up that not all experience, suggesting that perhaps, with more attempts, something will eventually work. (Richelle Charkot)

The Hamilton Sub Register

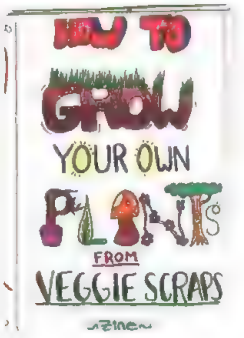
Zine, Ben Needham and Tara Bursey, 16 pgs, ben.t.needham@gmail.com

Have you ever read a zine and just a few pages in had the feeling that the creator really, truly, deeply understood something about you? That you unexpectedly shared some crucial experience, opinion, or passion with a stranger? It's happened to me a few times, normally with people writing about the stuff that has been so key to my life, such as queerness, anarchism, survivor justice, etc. But this time it happened with something so near and dear to my heart that it might actually be what my heart is made of: sandwiches.

Author (critic?) Ben Needham's zine begins with an anecdote decrying the sad lack of tolerable hoagies (subs, grinders, whatever) in his hometown of Toronto. Hamilton, it would seem, has sandwich options that can actually rival their American counterparts, and the rest of the zine is dedicated to breaking down the smattering of options in the city. Classic heavy hitter Bonanza sets it off, though Andy's and Duarte hold their own. Some reviews don't actually say much about the food, rather about the experience: "I've eaten at Buddy's, but have no memory of the quality of subs, probably due to the frantic state of mind I was in trying to navigate this hell-hole pocket of the city by bicycle."

This is all very my style. As a loyal diasporic Philadelphian, I am a champion of the hoagie and cheesesteak, but also endlessly curious to try new sandwiches in new places. I also am the kind of guy who writes sub reviews about a place even if I can't really remember what the sub was like. The writing is funny, the whole thing is tongue in cheek, and Tara Bursey's drawings just sweeten the deal.

If you enjoyed the 1996 PBS special Sandwiches You Will Like, think reviews are good for a goof, or have a heart made of ham and cappicola, this zine is for you. (Jonathan Valelly)



How to Grow Your Own Plants from Veggie Scraps

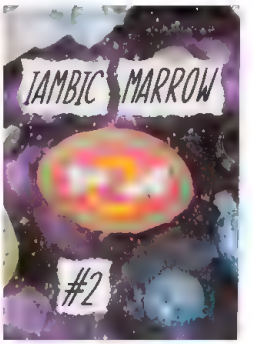
Zine, 8 pgs, @outasightzine, etsy.com/shop/OutaSightZine

Folks on the lookout for DIY waste-not-want-not tips are in for a treat — and that treat is a vegetable! *How to Grow Your Own Plants from Veggie Scraps* shows you how to do exactly what the title says. You don't have to compost those green onion nubs or toss that avocado pit. Make new food with them!

This folded, one-sheet, eight-page zine is abundantly clear in its colour illustrations and concise in its guidance, impressively so for how compact it is. Illustrated and written by hand on notebook paper, the pages have been scanned and resized to fit the one-sheet, eight-page form.

It is by an unnamed creator who sells similarly handwritten and hand-illustrated zines on Etsy under the moniker Outasight Zine.

Re-growing processes are illustrated for avocadoes, green onions, lettuce, cabbage, bok choy, and more. It is a small but mightily resourceful zine for anyone interested in reducing food waste. (Joshua Barton)



Iambic Marrow #1 and #2,

Perzines, Marin Doyle, 28 pgs and 20 pgs, etsy.com/shop/marinboyle

I picked up lots of awesome zines at the Hamilton Zineposium this year, but these ones stood out. As soon as I saw Marin Doyle's table, I was excited about their work, since I'm such a sucker for perzines and political zines, especially with a queer twist. As they put it in their bio, Doyle is a nonbinary, queer and disabled artist who published their first zine in 2015 and has "been writing their fingers to the bone ever since." I, for one, am so glad that's the case.

Each issue of *Iambic Marrow* starts with a short timeline or list of accomplishments and events from the year (2016 and 2017) — going back to school, getting collared by their partner, getting into therapy, stuff like that. But their accessible, classic perzine style writing brings these events to life.

Doyle shares short essays about topics such as Tourette's Syndrome, about being a sex worker and the way people treat sex workers, and about how fucked up social assistance and disability support bureaucracies can be. While some of their other zines are more specific to issues, these are a mix of diary entries and musings and calls to action, punctuated by bits of art. Their writing is strong and accessible throughout the works and gets more confident and purposeful in the second issue. This is what perzines are for! (Jonathan Valelly)

National Teen Set Outsider # 35

Fanzine, edited by Will Carroll, 32 Edmonds St. #1, Rochester, NY, 14607

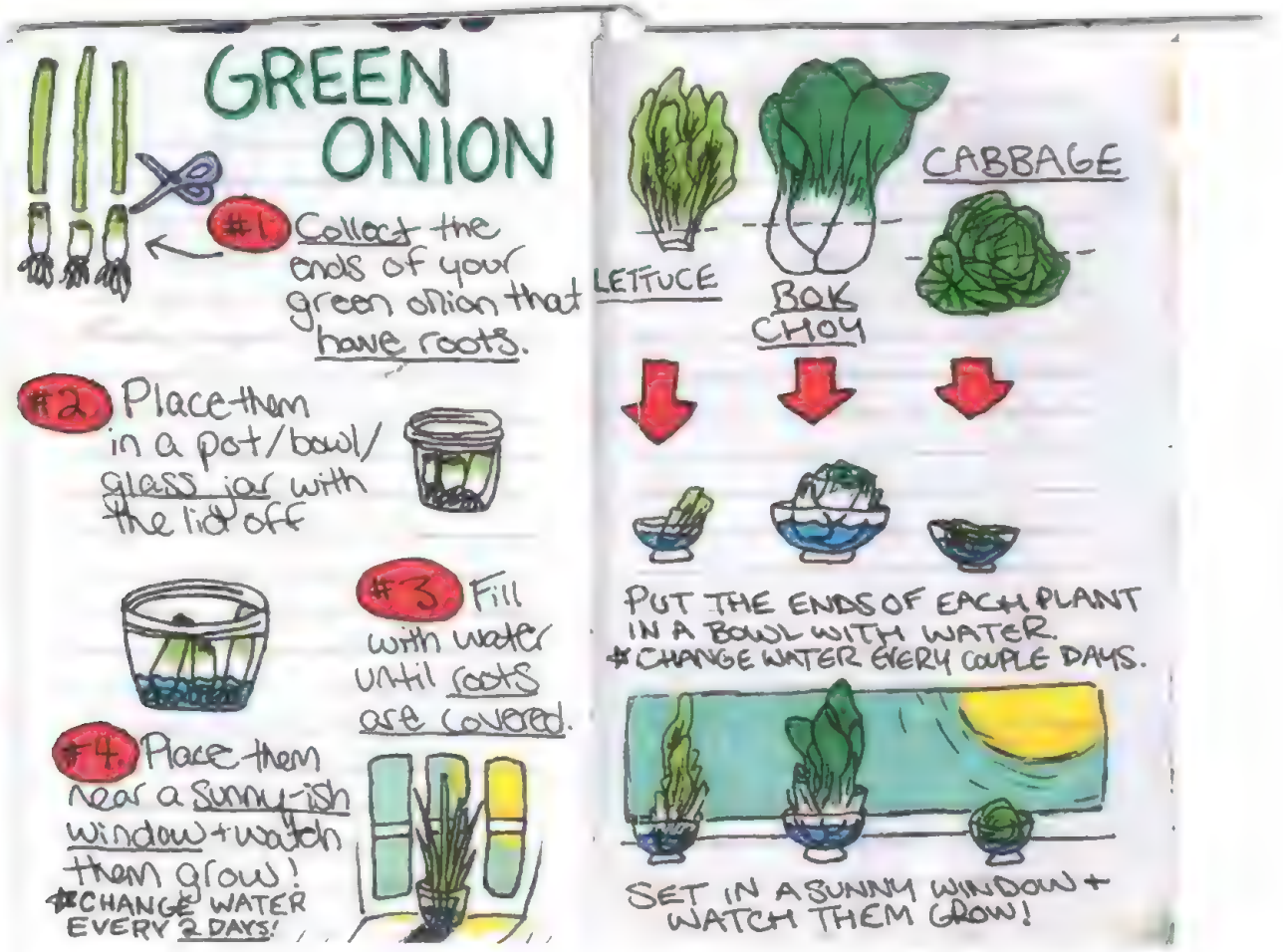
Rochester cut-and-paste punks are back with Issue 35 of this very approachable, occasionally goofy, quarter-sized gem. *The National Teen Set Outsider* has an oldschool feeling I enjoy and, beyond the NoBunny interview, so much of this zine is a throwback: female wrestling, *Beavis & Butt-Head*, pizza, hillbilly music, cannibals, and a whole bunch of other weird crap. I used to know this zine as the *Rochester Teen Set Outsider*, but they've clearly gotten too big for their britches and are now mass communicating the big topics: like diabolical clowns, the occult, comic artist Al Jaffee, a backhanded obit for Billy Graham, and enough immature jokes to make your subway or waiting room experience a bit more bearable.

I am always jealous of zine editors that can corral this many weirdos together and produce something that holds up well as an organic whole. And it is impressive just how much they fit in this small zine. If a piece doesn't land for you, there's another one right after that is probably worth your time. *The National Teen Set Outsider* is insolent enough for you rebels ("The lay teachers were drippy hippie folk mass freaks, who helped drive most of my generation towards the dark and harsher sounds and themes of the metal"), heartfelt enough for you punks ("It's easy to lose your way in the endless days of misery and bullshit"), and funny enough ("the fucking zoo animals escape after drinking water with PCP in it") to hopefully make you put down your phone for just a second.

I kind of want to write for them. (Chris Landry)

EXCERPT

FROM **How to Grow Your Own Plants from Veggie Scraps** BY **Outasight**


GREEN ONION
#1 Collect the ends of your green onion that have roots.
#2 Place them in a pot/bowl/glass jar with the lid off
#3 Fill with water until roots are covered.
#4 Place them near a sunny-ish window + watch them grow!
*CHANGE WATER EVERY 2 DAYS!
CABBAGE
LETTUCE
BOK CHOY
PUT THE ENDS OF EACH PLANT IN A BOWL WITH WATER.
*CHANGE WATER EVERY COUPLE DAYS.
SET IN A SUNNY WINDOW + WATCH THEM GROW!

reviewed on page 31

On Being a Fucking Slut

Zine, Anonymous, 36 pgs,
lookmumzinedistro.blogspot.com

I picked up this beauty at the Hamilton Zineposium, where it was being distrod by the fabulous Look Mum! Distro. The zine is impossible to miss, not only for its provocative title (and subtitle: *A Femme Perspective on Surviving Rape & Getting Laid*) and sensual cover image of an ass having its panties pulled down. The lettering and image are also done in a shiny copper foil that shines at the reader or browsing zine fair customer defiantly and glamorously.

There are so many important and wonderful perzines and resource zines out there about sexual assault, consent, survivor narratives and tips, and sex positivity. Each one of these is unique and useful in its own way, and I salute the brave writers who share these stories with the world to empower themselves and others. That said, I've personally read so many of them that I sometimes get desensitized to the powerful charge and intense vulnerability of the genre. This zine shook me out of that.

The anonymous author writes unsparingly about her experiences of rape, domestic violence, and abusive relationships, detailing the unique dynamics of different situations. I found the author's ability to honestly discuss how she felt at the time of different incidents — confused, culpable, trapped — and tell the story of how she came to identify abusive situations after the fact. Most importantly, she walks us through how her ongoing healing and learning through real friendships and community and reconnecting with her Indigeneity has helped her embrace her own sluttiness, non-monogamy, and confidence as a sexual being in the world. It's a complex, but ultimately hopeful narrative that resonated with me as someone who has experienced sexual assault and negotiated non-monogamy and promiscuity through that lens.

This an excellent zine, building on the work of other brave perzinesters like Clementine Morrigan (who is prominently thanked) and others. (Jonathan Valelly)

Shoes Fanzine #8

Zine, Nate, 72 pgs, $3 (free to prisoners),
shoesfanzine@hotmail.com

I'm a sucker for a good old punk political zine. The first zines I encountered were anarchist tracts and manifestos, and I'm still drawn to any zine that I think might be instructive for my own politics and activism. I'm much more likely to read an activist interview, essay of social commentary or breakdown of some heady theory if it's in print form and handed to me then if you send me yet another hyperlink over email. The blogosphere, the Facebook hot-take machine, the unreadable design of *RiseUp* — I'll take a good old zine any day.

So, when *Shoes Fanzine #8* came in the mail and the very first piece was about a teenage punk organizing a chapter of Anti-Racist Action in '90s Sarnia, Ontario, I knew this would be up my alley. This issue's theme is interviews old and new. That particular interview was from 2006, but is followed by a few more recent ones. The extended interview with Matt Hern, a BC activist whose name I've occasionally seen in the AK Press catalogue, was super insightful. It gave me lots to chew on about the way the myth of the troubled "inner-city" doesn't hold up in the age of violent, rapid gentrification. Hern urges us to look to and learn from the communities on the periphery of our urban centres. "The suburbanization of poverty and racialization of the suburbs is happening in cities across North America, both with incredible speed and also kind of stealthily." Hern works super hard to defer to the expertise of the communities themselves and, of course, it's a little awkward reading this interview with some white dude about how to go work in Black and Brown communities. But he knows that it's awkward, and I enjoyed reading how he attempts to work through that.

The next interview is again something completely different. It's an interview with Karmin, who went on a seven-month sea voyage with her estranged dad. It's pretty wacky. Not only does she have to reconnect with her pops and negotiate complex emotional dynamics, they run out of gas in the middle of a lightning storm and visit Easter Island, among other episodes. Following that is a straightforward punk scene interview with Shellshag. A bit of inside baseball, but still a fun read.

Last up, and I guess I would have seen this coming if I had bothered to read the table of contents... there's an interview with zine legend Aaron Cometbus! Whoa! Apparently, the author met him in New York years ago and they stayed friends. The interview is cool because it uses the same interview questions from the first interview they did 18 years previous, and you get to read both the old and new answers and see how they've changed. I'm not gonna give much away, but I wouldn't blame you if you skip to the end of the zine for this one.

I don't know this Nate fellow or why I haven't read Shoes Fanzine before, but holy crap, this was a good, solid, classic zinester's zine. I had a blast. (Jonathan Valelly)

Souvenir #2

Zine, JM Francheteau, Issue 2,
Twitter: @franchetoast

"For a festival worker, nightfall smells like trash" opens one of two essays in this zine, followed by a methodical, well-reasoned, and first-hand account of the the disconnect between message and reality when it comes to the environmental impact of outdoor festivals. JM Francheteau made *Souvenir* at the Toronto Zine Library during a "zine off" and while presumably it was hastily pulled together at an event, it has a thoroughness readers will appreciate. I learned a bunch from Francheteau's experiences and thoughts, which are authoritatively backed up with footnotes.

But where the zine really shines is the opening piece on Toronto street artist Rocky Dobey. Culled from background reading, an interview, and face-to-face appreciation of the work itself, Francheteau details the four-decades long career of its socially engaged street artist whose works often stand as tributes to the marginalized or departed. Dobey's works are not the product of wheat paste or spray paint, but rather highly detailed metal, wax, intaglio prints, and etched copper plates. The black-and-white format of the zine doesn't do these works justice, so I found photos of his work in a 2008 issue of *Fuse Magazine*, which included colour reproductions of Dobey's installations in support of the Tyendinaga Mohawk titled *200 Years of Land Struggles*. The texture of the text, embossed or in relief, carrying a certain gravitas, but have the hand-forged imprecision that looks unmistakably illegal. Francheteau provides a map and a list of locations where the rusted remains of these artworks have survived over the years, most of which are in Toronto's downtown west end. Dobey remains a reluctant subject, shying away from elaborating on his work.

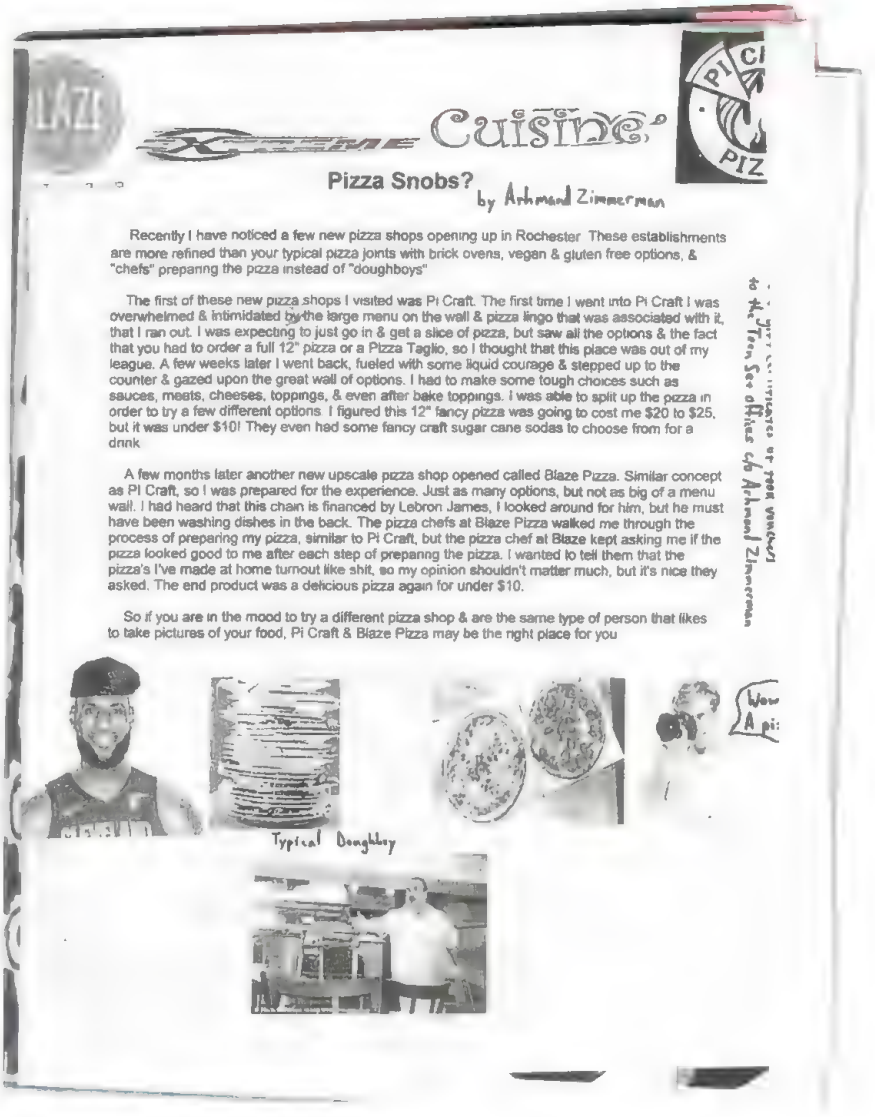
I found the tone of *Souvenir* a little formal at times, and my copy was missing at least one page, so I am probably missing some background detail. All art and imagery in the zine comes from Rocky Dobey's art, but the dull grays of the photocopier did not do justice to the brash texture of the original images.

Still, I was glad I got to check this out and look forward to reading more from Francheteau. (Chris Landry)

Check out a review of Souvenir Issue #1 *on page 47 in the Lit Zine section.*

EXCERPT

FROM **National Teen Set Outsider** EDITED BY **Will Carroll**



Pizza Snobs?

by Ashmael Zimmerman

Recently I have noticed a few new pizza shops opening up in Rochester. These establishments are more refined than your typical pizza joints with brick ovens, vegan & gluten free options, & "chefs" preparing the pizza instead of "doughboys"

The first of these new pizza shops I visited was Pi Craft. The first time I went into Pi Craft I was overwhelmed & intimidated by the large menu on the wall & pizza lingo that was associated with it, that I ran out. I was expecting to just go in & get a slice of pizza, but saw all the options & the fact that you had to order a full 12" pizza or a Pizza Taglio, so I thought that this place was out of my league. A few weeks later I went back, fueled with some liquid courage & stepped up to the counter & gazed upon the great wall of options. I had to make some tough choices such as sauces, meats, cheeses, toppings, & even after bake toppings. I was able to split up the pizza in order to try a few different options. I figured this 12" fancy pizza was going to cost me $20 to $25, but it was under $10! They even had some fancy craft sugar cane sodas to choose from for a drink.

A few months later another new upscale pizza shop opened called Blaze Pizza. Similar concept as Pi Craft, so I was prepared for the experience. Just as many options, but not as big of a menu wall. I had heard that this chain is financed by Lebron James, I looked around for him, but he must have been washing dishes in the back. The pizza chefs at Blaze Pizza walked me through the process of preparing my pizza, similar to Pi Craft, but the pizza chef at Blaze kept asking me if the pizza looked good to me after each step of preparing the pizza. I wanted to tell them that the pizza's I've made at home turnout like shit, so my opinion shouldn't matter much, but it's nice they asked. The end product was a delicious pizza again for under $10.

So if you are in the mood to try a different pizza shop & are the same type of person that likes to take pictures of your food, Pi Craft & Blaze Pizza may be the right place for you

Typical Doughboy

Wow A pi

reviewed on page 32

The VENT 2.0

Zine, Edited by Piankhi Squabblez, ACB Zine Distro, PO Box 721, Homewood, IL, 60430, USA, betweenthebars.org

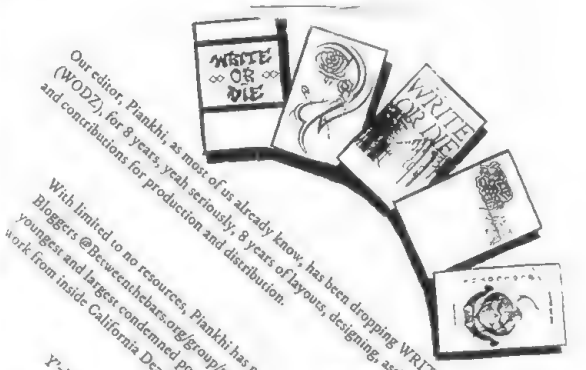
The 13th Amendment to the US Constitution says "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States," and it is one of the social obscenities of our time. It's hard to wrap your head around the fact that a country that comprises 4.4% of the world's population houses around 22% of the world's prisoners.

Technically most prisoners are guaranteed the right to access some level of educational programming. Despite institutional resistance towards actually making that access a reality (as the recent prison strike indicates, they'd much rather enlist prisoners in labour that pays them mere pennies), super resilient writers, artists, and activists on the inside have been able to sustain a surprisingly vibrant zine publishing culture. I've read prison zines before but never one so timely.

The VENT, in reference to the air vent in a prison cell, is the platform that delivers poetry, rap, and political commentary to a rapt, incarcerated audience every night, reverberated through an air duct. The zine strikes a jubilant tone at the outset, "no busters allowed clause in full effect" but the subject matter is harsh, the delivery is colourful, and the level of enthusiasm is through the roof. Most of the material in *The VENT* takes the form of written raps that range from dense metaphysical agitprop to more straightforward gangsta rap with Onyx-level bloodlust. So much of it speaks directly to our time.

EXCERPT

FROM **The VENT 2.0** EDITED BY **Piankhi Squabblez**



Our editor, Piankhi, as most of us already know, has been dropping WRITE OR DIE ZINES (WODZ), for 8 years, yeah seriously, 8 years of layouts, designing, assimilations, hustling content, and contributions for production and distribution.

With limited to no resources, Piankhi has provided WODZ readers, and Papyrus Collective Group Bloggers @Betweenthebars.org/group/papyruscollective, full exclusive and unedited access to the youngest and largest condemned population in the United States of America. And for 8 years of his work from inside California Death Row, Piankhi has never asked anyone for one dime.

Y'all already know the business. The state of the struggle requires that wherever you are right now, to get active in our micro-fundraiser for the support for independent publishing, and the prisoner zine vision of this wise young man by picking up your gadgets right now, and go to Jpay.com, and rush a donation of any amount to:

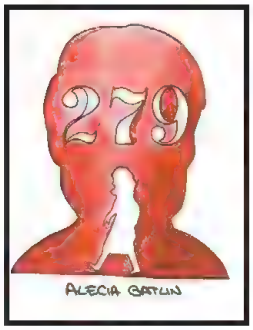
Byron P. Wilson #P.76622
San Quentin State Prison
San Quentin, California 94974
USA

And thank you for your support,
Write Or Die: Zine Project

On Black Jewelz, B.G. (Demetrius Howard) brings Chuck D or Paris to mind with his dense verse, "howcan [sic] I not cry after what I saw on world news, couldn't even hide or deny a world of hate and war against us, where our place beyond the basketball court or football field, entertaining you." My inner rap dad was duly head nodding.

There's a pretty strong macho vibe that runs through the whole thing. Affectionate line drawings give a face to the written verses. *The VENT* touts its "grimey consciousness," and this issue includes references to police slayings, the undermining of DACA, and other manifestations of systematic discrimination, all the while managing to be harsh, heartbreaking, and joyful all at once. (Chris Landry)

COMICS AND ART ZINES



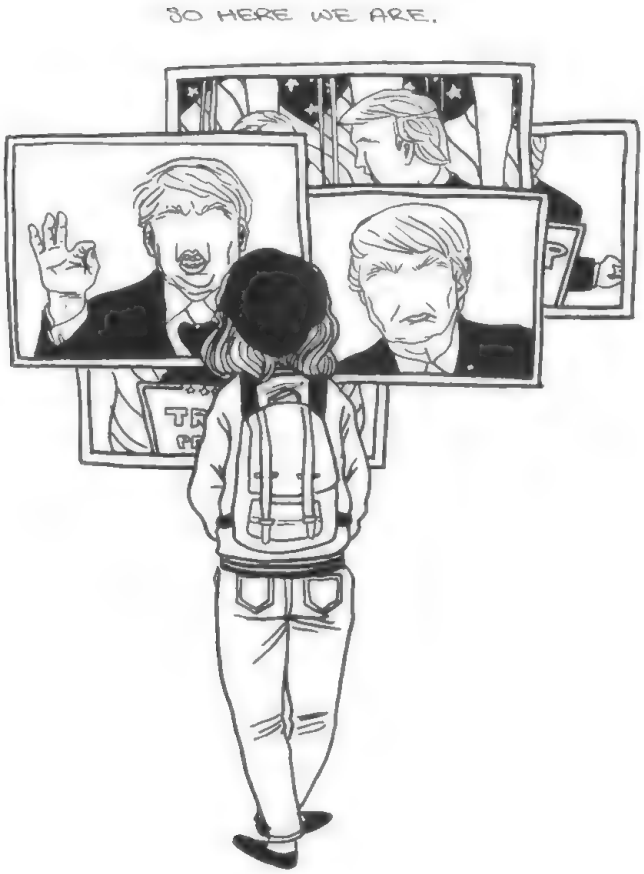
279

Art zine, Alecia Gatlin, 8 pgs, AleciaGatlin.com

Firstly, the format of *279* is super foldy and very cute. It's borderline origami. Printed on legal size white bond, it folds up into a neat little pocket zine that you can take anywhere. The content of *279:* less cute. Alecia Gatlin is the creator, and she's engaging in some real talk. You kind of just need to read it, but she writes about her confusion, her emotions and her general brain activity on the whole. This zine feels a bit like a thought exercise, and Alecia should be commended for being brave and spitting it out on paper. Of course, for all of its complexity, it's not uncomfortable to read. It's actually pretty universal. Some might file this under "random existential musings," but I found it to be more than that. There are some interesting drawings and sketches in this zine that,

EXCERPT

FROM **279** BY **Alecia Gatlin**



I'VE BEEN HAVING A DIFFICULT TIME FOCUSING. IM FLOATING IN A THICK SMOG OF VOICES, BUT IT'S ALL JUST HARSH NOISE.
EVERYTHING FEELS LIKE BEING IN A DREAM THAT KEEPS CLIPPING FORWARD. MY EVERY NERVE IS GRATING.

I think, are perhaps the star attractions. The words support, but the imagery essentially sets the pace and the words layer on top in a "yup, we're fucked" kind of fashion.

The zine also has some valuable thoughts on friendship and inclusivity that seem to have been written by a young person, but are likely of most value to an old or semi-old person. The cover is red and has a vague 1970s-ish look and feel to it. That's not a statement on content but more on the zine's playful aesthetics. (Cam Gordon)

Hey! You!

Zine, Blake Lewis, $5 plus postage, 24 pgs, blake@blakelewisphoto.com

A menacing point. Some shadows. Blurriness. Confinement. Confusion... And that's just what's on front and back covers! Blake Lewis is a photographer based in London, UK, and *Hey! You!* is his first zine, a collected work steeped in intimacy and some ickiness (the good kind). Lewis captures a wide range of everyday scenarios here. There are a lot of street scene and images of people mid-activity. It's more grime than glamour but then again, this is photo realism in the absolutely most literal sense.

One of the most appealing aspects of this collection is the complete absence of pretense. Lewis isn't trying to portray anybody or anything "living their best life" or whatever jargony rubbish idealists and semi-bummed 40-somethings

EXCERPT

FROM **Hey! You!** BY **Blake Lewis**

are using in their Instagram copy these days. Instead, we get actual snapshots of humdrum life. People smoking, playing guitars, relieving themselves on street corners, or being dead in a graveyard (spoiler alert). The zine is also darn cool, because to some this could have just been a Tumblr page, but Lewis chose to print everything instead. Provocative choice. (Cam Gordon)

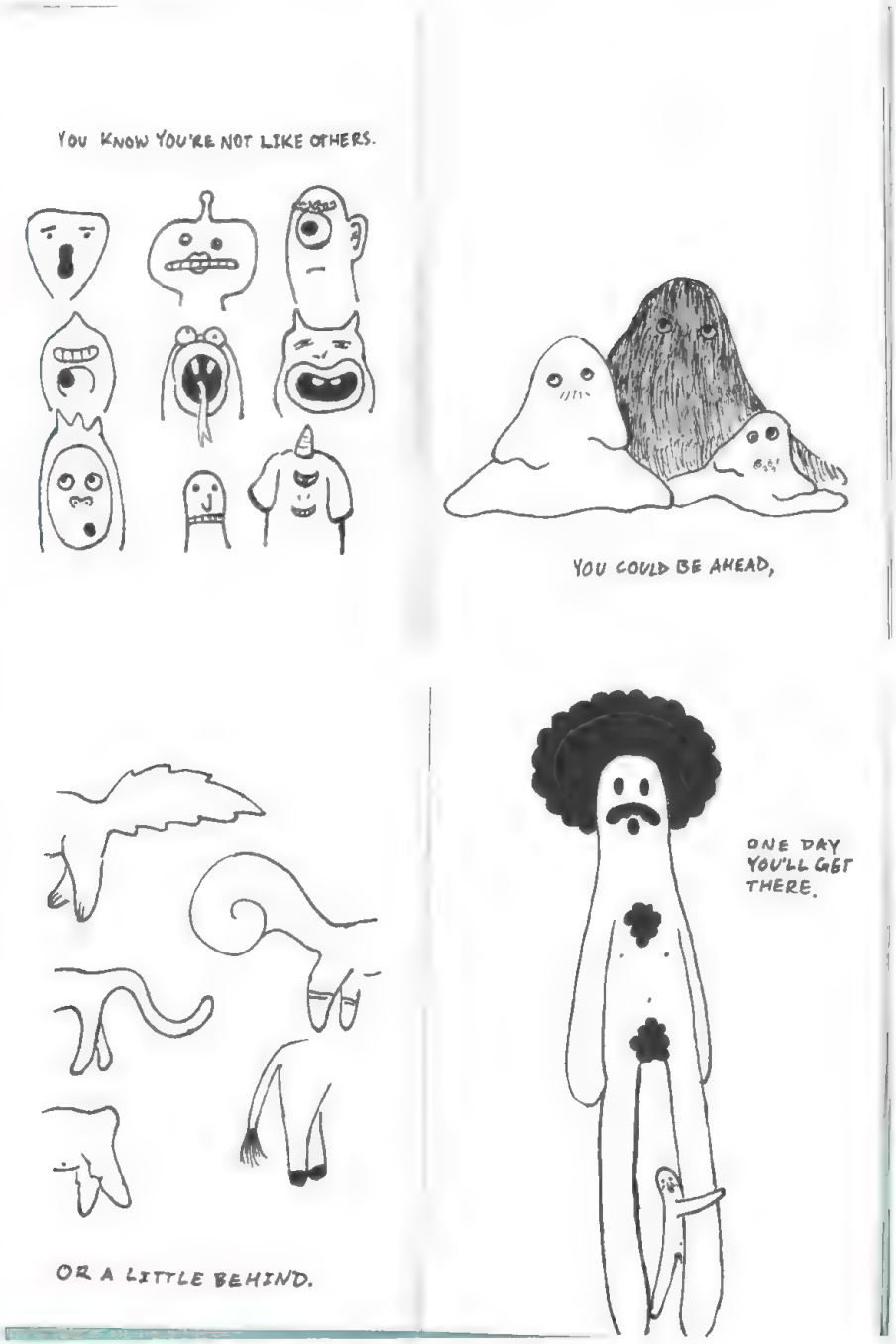
Even Monsters Are Growing

Art zine, Roy Luo, 20 pgs, Instagram: @RoyLuoArt

A wee bit of "I'm OK. You're OK" rhetoric can apparently work wonders if you're a monster trying to find its way in this crazy, mixed-up world. Or completely unreality. Either/or. *Even Monsters Are Growing* addresses real issues for fake creatures. One could surmise self-doubt and emotional turmoil is rampant with these cute critters, as artist Roy Luo's focus is on monsters that are gloomy and glum. It's super sad. However, transposed with the sorrow is uplifting platitude that are a bit memeish in a fairly positive fashion. Short thoughts like "It's natural to be scared," are smushed together with monster doodles, giving this zine the feeling of a collection of graffiti or quick etchings on the wall of a high school cafeteria. It's clean and simple. Luo does well not to overcomplicate things and the package is a brisk look-and-read that'll take mere minutes, if not seconds, to get through. You could probably jump in anywhere, ogle a few monsters, absorb a bit of positivity and leave feeling better for the experience. Again, this is 101 stuff but it's also delightful stuff. Affirmation of anything can be hard to come by these days, so if hopeful lil' monsters can provide a boost of anything, why not put them to the task? They're just oozing and wallowing otherwise. (Cam Gordon)

EXCERPT

FROM **Even Monsters Are Growing** BY **Roy Luo**



Industry Standard #3

Photo zine, Trevor Clement, 66 pgs, trevor.parlo.clement@gmail.com, trevorclement.com, $10 PPD to USA, $12 PPD to Canada (USD)

Mattick is the star of this third issue of Trevor Clement's wrestling photo zine, *Industry Standard*. In what looks to be photos of actual small-scale wrestling leagues, the square-jawed Mattick rages and prevails against his opponents, bedecked in punk rock black and cool-ass tattoos.

Honestly, I have zero interest in wrestling, but this zine is remarkable as an artifact. It is z-folded with cardstock covers printed in two-tone colouring, with its interior pages in black and white. Going from front to back, the zine is read in two parts, the first beginning with a tipped-in photo of Mattick printed on transparency, and the second with a full-colour photo of Mattick (and manager?) ringside. There is no narrative, only the images of Mattick crushing it. In terms of weight, it is a hefty zine, clearly a labour-intensive creation.

If you like seeing two dudes (pretend to) beat the shit out of each other, come for the wrestling, but then stay for the singular lesson in unique zine design and construction. (Joshua Barton)

Just Encased

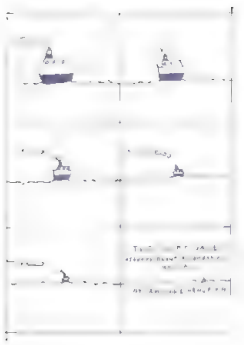
Art zine, Danielle Susi, @daniellesusi, $7

"I know my origins may be a little questionable," a pleasant anthropomorphized

EXCERPT

FROM **Industry Standard** BY **Trevor Clement**

hot dog says, "but I wanted to take some time to tell you about myself." Danielle Susi's short zine shows a cute little hot dog with arms and legs, illustrated by Siobhán Gallagher, explaining how it came to be as a "tubed" and tough amalgamation of different animals. It is an irreverent, yet meaningful allegory for all the parts that make us whole, served up as a very easy read. Simple, clean and to the point. (Richelle Charkot)



The Ship'd Sailed: Stories About Friendships and Loss

Comic, edited by Amy Ng and Weng Pixin, 40 pgs, etsy.com/ca/shop/pikaland

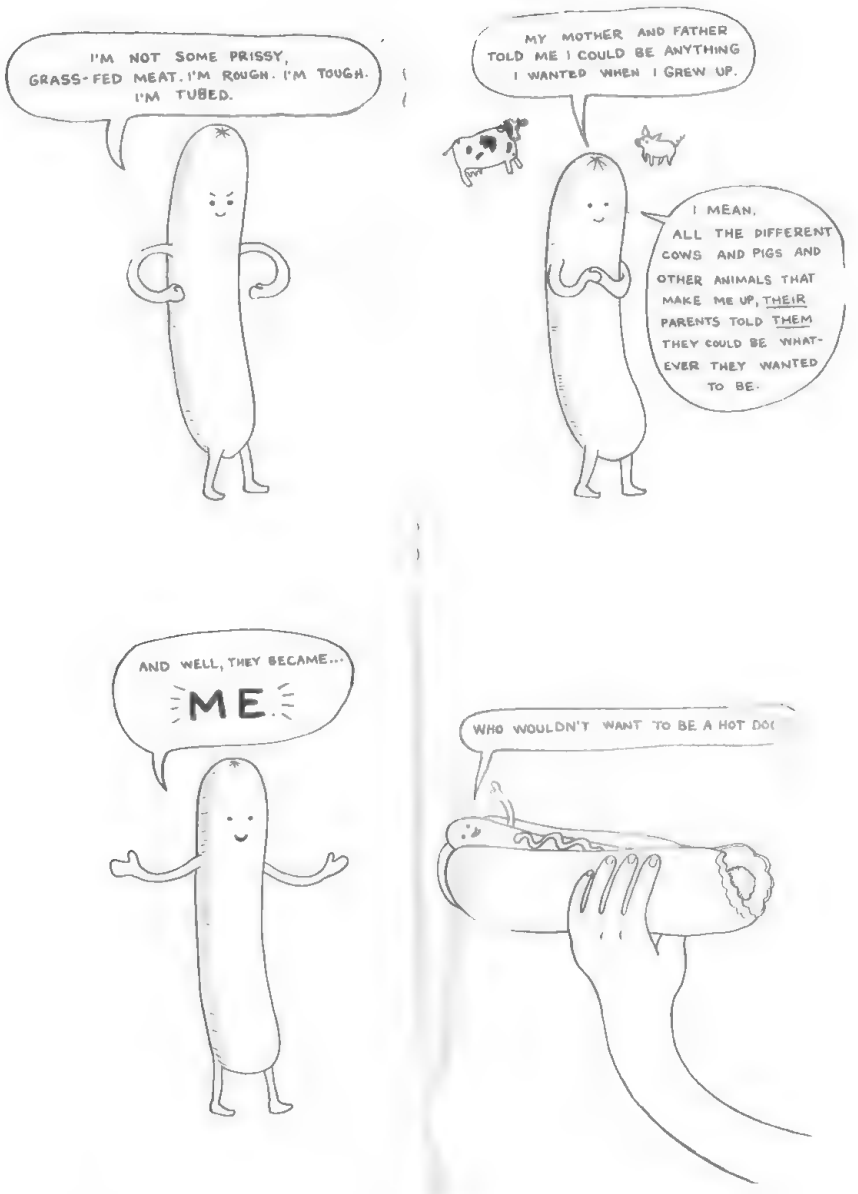
Comprising stories from seven women artists from around the world, *The Ship'd Sailed: Stories About Friendships and Loss* collects stories about specific friendships, exploring what happened that led to its end or withering.

The work here is deeply personal and extremely relatable. Friendships can be a fickle thing, and each of the artists excel at exploring the different forms that they may take, and the equally unique ways through which they may decline. In Amy Ng's section, three separate instances of friendship hurdles are presented, those awkward moments where you're not sure how to respond to a social slight. I cringed and actively began to feel anxious at one of Ng's pages, the comic depicting a moment that I'm sure many know, and that they hate to both experience and hear about. Likewise, Weng Pixin's section relates the deterioration of a friendship, the realization that one's own investment in a relationship may differ greatly from the other individual, touching on the death of a friendship, and who may really be to blame.

Julia Barata's section examines a friendship where the cause of death is unknown. 20 years later, social media momentarily resurrects it, if only for a brief moment of fond remembrance and acknowledgment that what was there was good. Miun's comic depicts a realization of differences in real time, a friendship that, though fun in the beginning, can become exhausting. Powerpaola and Willwin Yang explore feelings of being used, and the need to admit to oneself that you've been made to act as a social currency or a distraction for those friendships that the other person has chosen to prioritize. AnnGee Neo's comic closes out the anthology,

EXCERPT

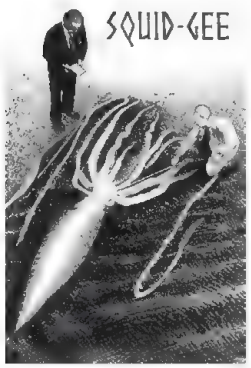
FROM **Just Encased** BY **Danielle Susi**


I'M NOT SOME PRISSY, GRASS-FED MEAT. I'M ROUGH. I'M TOUGH. I'M TUBED.
MY MOTHER AND FATHER TOLD ME I COULD BE ANYTHING I WANTED WHEN I GREW UP.
I MEAN, ALL THE DIFFERENT COWS AND PIGS AND OTHER ANIMALS THAT MAKE ME UP, THEIR PARENTS TOLD THEM THEY COULD BE WHATEVER THEY WANTED TO BE.
AND WELL, THEY BECAME... ME.
WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO BE A HOT DO

reviewed on page 39

their story of a close friend who, after a trip, became inexplicably distant. As with Ng's section, I found this immediately relatable (especially Neo's wearing only "black band tees"), and the visceral reaction the comic elicited made me pause and think back on my own friendships.

In terms of theme, *The Ship'd Sailed* is perhaps one of the most relatable anthologies I've read in a while. Each work is at times deeply personal and immediately relatable, with one being able to find themselves, or people they know, in every artist's contribution. "When did being friends become so hard?" Ng asks. Who wouldn't relate to that? (Graham Sigurdson)



Squid-Gee

Comic, Keenan Poloncsak, 44 pgs, pro-can.org

Kraken angst has plummeted in recent centuries (I think). Nevertheless, there's still enough concern out there to fill one more zine, the creepy and compelling *Squid-Gee*. This wordless wonder was created by Keenan Poloncsak, and depicts a world overcome by a super squid doing super scary shit. Mad tentacle action, man. I'd love to know what the motivation was behind *Squid-Gee*. Most folks have some symbolic (or possibly literal) behemoth in their lives, only too happy to fuck shit up and push over items and whatnot. Here, there's actually a bit of science behind the story, or at least scientific history. We won't spoil it, but a teaser: the story takes place in Montreal, and Montreal millions of years ago was at the bottom of a prehistoric season. That's not really a license for a plus-sized squid to run amuck in the city, but I don't know, here we are! The zine itself looks great. The artwork is top notch and feels contemporary even though the subject matter is steeped in monster movie chic. Better still, the action sequences scream off the page and even death and destruction is handled with grace. There's zero dialogue, but that's completely fine, as these drawings, all of them, speak volumes. (Cam Gordon)

EXCERPT

FROM **Squid-Gee** BY **Keenan Poloncsak**

Statues

Comic, Eryn Lou, erynlou.com

Statues collects a number of recent comics from Toronto's Eryn Lou, with each copy of the zine including an original drawing.

Lou's comics have a strong sense of motion. The wavy line of their figures' clothing giving a sense that nothing is really standing still. The characters billow out to fill the panels and pages, like an elaborate haute-couture design, each one unique and wholly unto themselves. The two-page spread at the centre of the zine best exemplifies this, a vibrant border surrounding two figures waltzing, their bodies seeming to meld into one mass as they flow into one another. In another comic — a small, silent set of four-panels — a figure walks as their pants balloon up in size, threatening to overtake them.

There's not really a sense of any 'theme' that binds together the work in *Statues,* but this is not to its detriment. Each comic stands alone, with the typically short length of each letting them rely on their own strengths. A single figure poses, two converse entirely in punctuation marks, a cowboy realizes the truth behind 'riding into the sunset.' The brevity of each piece only makes them stronger. There's no real need to 'breathe' between each comic as one moves onto the next. It's a light read, but that's not to say that it's a weak one. There's a palpable sense of an artist exploring themselves and the ways they want their work to be seen. I'm excited for what's next. (Graham Sigurdson)

EXCERPT

FROM **Statues** BY **Eryn Lou**

Suite of 3 Broadsheets

Comic zine, Conor Stechschulte and Jennifer Chen-su Huang, conorstechschulte.com, huangchensu.com

Suite of 3 Broadsheets collects just that, three works on broadsheet, comprising comics by Stechschulte, with writing but Chen-su Huang.

I'm not the biggest fan of comics on newsprint, mostly due to the difficulty in storing them and their unwieldiness. However, when it's done right, there's nothing quite like it. Stechschulte expertly works with just the black of the ink and the greyed newsprint, his strong sense of working with a limited colour palette, as previously and masterfully seen in his *Generous Bosom* series, conveying an array of different moods.

In one comic, a woman rises from the water to tell the story of a park ranger. The minor changes in movement and space convey a stillness and weight to things, an almost motionless comic that nonetheless feels drawn out and intense. In the next, a park ranger gives a tour of an Indigenous mound site, a series of quiet vistas disrupted only by the wind, which Stechschulte depicts almost as though it were tears in the page.

In the interior, Jennifer Chen-su Huang lists 115 memories that the sound of the wind evokes, a series of personal recollections ranging from the minor to the deeply personal. In the final broadsheet, two friends have tea and discuss a protest. The focus is on the hands — the small actions of preparing tea or unpacking a bag overlaid by conversation. The hands go into a bag, pulling out the sign

EXCERPT

FROM **Statues** BY **Eryn Lou**

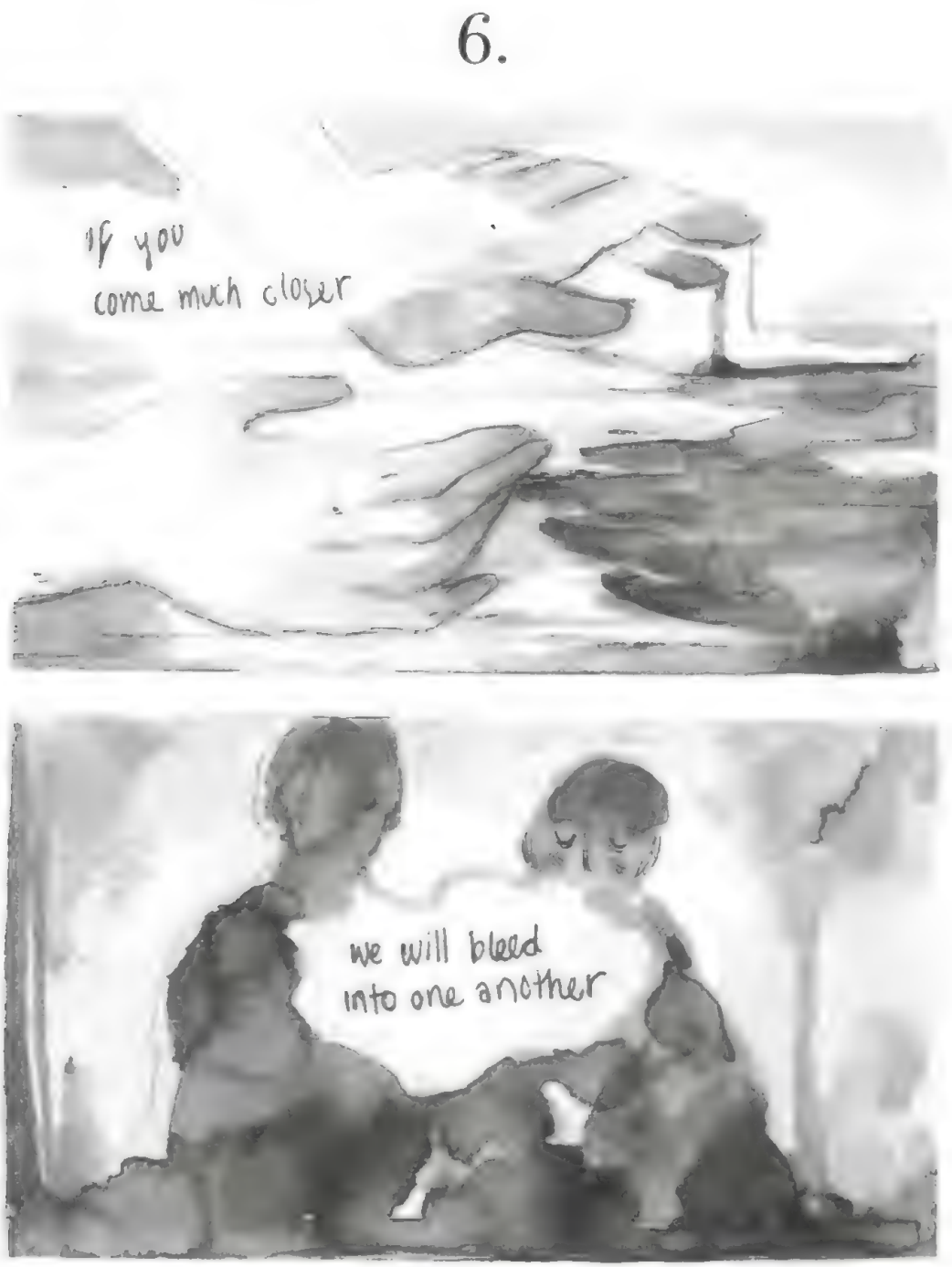
dream town
SPONSORED BY MELATONIN
FACES LIKE WHITE NOISE AS YOU FALL ASLEEP
ONE FACE EMERGES. IT COULD BE YOURS BUT YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOU LOOK.
IT FADES OUT
NOW THE FACES ARE YOUR FRIENDS.
BUT THERE'S A SPIDER!
HELLO, FRIENDS!
GET IT GONE!
YOU RECOGNIZE IT FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE.
IT'S SO BEAUTIFUL, YOU COULD CRY.
BUT YOU HATE IT.
YOU LOSE THE SPIDER. BUT YOU FIND A BABY
HUSH BABY, I WILL.
IS IT YOURS? HOLD IT TO SEE.
MAYBE THE BABY IS YOU.

one the friend brought to the protest, the broadsheet's interior, when opened, revealing the sign itself (and doubling as a poster): NO RACIST LEADERS.

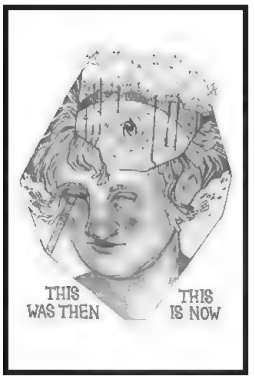
All of these small moments amount to something more, and the unfolding of the broadsheets themselves as you read build towards a larger perspective. Much like a suite of music, the individual works here stand on their own, but when collected, they're all the stronger, the interplay of ideas and themes creating a cohesive and stronger whole. (Graham Sigurdson)

EXCERPT

FROM **This Was Then This Is Now** BY **Kira Buro**



reviewed on page 45



This Was Then This Is Now

Comic zine, Kira Buro, IG @kiraburo

This Was Then This Is Now consists of nine comics, the title of the collection serving to highlight the theme and motivation that runs throughout. In stark and flowing black and white, Buro explores the intermingling of the past and the present, how the thoughts, perspectives, and even relationships from the past influence who we may be in the present. Their line is strong and varied, and passion permeates the artwork. In these comics, Buro seems to suggest that to reminisce is to not simply perform the act of remembering something, it is a process of exploring oneself, bringing into perspective how we've arrived at our present moment, leaving us to wonder where we may go from here.

"I wonder if you know all the place you've been simply because my thoughts have taken you there with me," Buro writes in one comic, before concluding with, "Today I threw my thoughts of you down a mountainside ... I didn't understand then. I don't understand now." The past, it seems, it not something that needs to be looked upon fondly and, in admitting that, perhaps we can begin to move forward.

At times, there is a sadness to the comics here, but there is never hopelessness. While the past may feel like it only ever dominates the present, at the same time, the past is just that — the past. "This was Then This Is Now," let the present be something unto itself. Buro understands this, and perhaps in reading this collection, the reader will as well. (Graham Sigurdson)

A Vancouver Alphabet

Art zine, April Milne, 32 pgs, AprilMilne.com

This work is whimsical. Very, very literal too. For residents of Vancouver, you're gonna see familiar sights matched up against letters from the alphabet. This will include items from the natural world, areas, structures, creatures and more. In each instance, there's a cute little illustration to prove the point. April Milne has a great style and, visually, this is very of the moment. Picking this up, it doesn't seem like a souvenir or tourist-oriented crap. Rather, it seems like something you'd find in an independent bookstore, organic restaurants, or perhaps mentioned as part of a CBC Radio segment about local artists.

What also makes this work stand out is that it's completely G-rated — any of the grit that makes Vancouver *Vancouver* is conspicuously absent. So, while it may be lacking something in terms of pure realism, it makes up for it by being something you can leave around the house and not be too concerned if toddlers start ogling it. The fact it kinda looks like a colouring book helps too. It makes it feel even more family-friendly, and yet not overly twee. Feels like a slightly difficult feat, but Milne somehow pulls it off in style. (Cam Gordon)

EXCERPT

FROM **A Vancouver Alphabet** BY **April Milne**

LITZINES AND CHAPBOOKS

Fake Bands

Zine, Isabella Laird, 14 pgs, isabellalaird.wordpress.com

Hit "Generate" enough times at bandnameemaker.com and you'll eventually get a usable band name: Wonderless Drunk, Screeching Deacon, Perverted Turnip of The Spun Maiden. (Why aren't these taken?)

Vancouver's Isabella Laird took a more thoughtful approach to the exercise. *Fake Bands* provides invented biographies for five fictitious groups — one per decade from the 1970s to the present. The Queen's Succubus (a 2010s heavy metal outfit) draws inspiration "from women and magical creatures in European folklore." Shrub & Bush (a 1970s folk band) exclusively writes songs about plants and fungi.

Each bio is accompanied by a related illustration or logo, and while the band histories are typically clever and amusing, it's the artwork that stands out here. Laird should consider a career in album cover design. (Scott Bryson)

Friendly

Poetry/photography zine, Emily Bueckert, 34 pgs, emilybueckert.com, $5

Don't fall for it; the title is a trick. "I wish I was friendly," says Emily Bueckert on page one. "This is why I am not!" On the next page, the first poem opens with "I threw up on the sidewalk."

Bueckert's situation doesn't improve much, as *Friendly* progresses: "When I hold fruit it rots," she states. "No matter where I'm going... I feel sick with lost chance but what I've lost I have no idea." We're joining her on a downward spiral as she unravels her last few threads of optimism.

Though it's tempting to join Bueckert in her apparent amusement at this state of affairs ("I'm sometimes attracted to the idea of eating an ash tray for breakfast"), she's plainly illustrating the toll that real mental illness can take, whether it's actually her own, or fictitious. The "I" in these poems can't envision a scenario in which anything might work out in their favour.

Dig deeply enough into this melting pot of misery, and you'll find an abundance of dexterous metaphor and imagery. At her most memorable, Bueckert writes in skin-crawling detail about others claiming ownership of her teeth: "I throw up again... I've had fingers shoved in my mouth to get me to stop talking. They pet my molars. They say hello remember me?... There is not enough ginger in the world." (Scott Bryson)

How I Didn't Write Any of My Books

Chapbook, Aurélie Noury, No Press, 21 pgs, derek@housepress.ca

Noury's essay is an ultra-violet light to the literary canon's invisible ink. *How I Didn't Write Any of My Books* sharpens our focus on negative space, the work that "could not be written down on paper," the empty bookshelf, the unfinished manuscript, the pulse of life that remains in embryo, "filling far more than pages, but entire lives."

The labyrinth of books not written — both in the lives of fictitious characters and "abstinent authors" — is an ensorcelling concept, touching on what is intrinsic to the artist: "a work is also everything that was not." Noury writes an almost encyclopedic inventory of this counter-literature, underlining the means by which works like *On Dandyism* by Baudelaire, or the manuscript of Robert Serval in Perec's *53 Days*, works that have not, in fact, been written, create a Rubin's vase in the literary realm. Siphoning completed imaginary texts into the Lorem Ipsum publishing project, Noury writes by reading, as "to create out of one's readings is paying off one's debts."

The chapbook itself is beautifully sewn together, jacketed with twice-ripped pages from Virginia Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* — ripped once out of the book's spine, and ripped second in half — producing a resonance out of divided sentences: "She could see the words / rhythmically in Cam's mind, / after her how it was like a / garden, and there were little / opening and shutting, and..." Noury is, in content and form, re-imagining the literary canon. (Jenna McClelland)

The Strong Badger Chronicle

Litzine, edited by Brock Peters, 28 pgs, Volume 3, 679 Sargent Avenue, Winnipeg MB, R3E 0A7, $7 PPD.

These stories are strange enough to give the impression they've been going on for pages before you joined, even though you're sure you started at the beginning. That's how *The Strong Badger Chronicle* left me, just a little lost at the outset. It's a slight *Alice in Wonderland* sensation brought to you by the deliberately weird. I appreciate the craft but I have trouble bending my mind to the frequency these short stories and poems are meant to be enjoyed at. I think if I experienced them being read aloud, with the full benefit of the vibe of the space it was created in, then I would get a better sense of it.

The Strong Badger Coffeehouse is an arts space in the West End of Winnipeg and this zine is published in limited run and written by the folks who frequent it. The photos are really stark, urban landscapes, and the hand stitching is a nice touch. The stories and poems are lovingly

typed on a turn of the century typewriter. Based on this, I would like to check out this space.

I'll confess that most of these surreal writings didn't do it for me, but I think it's really important for eccentrics to get together in public and make things like *The Strong Badger Chronicle*. It's really important to put things out in the world about coffee mixed with Ricola, about sedation guns, about octopi and ladybugs. It's important for the craft, as a gesture against the hegemony, for the good of society, or at least for people too smart and odd to even need to take drugs. (Chris Landry)

tattered sails (after un coup de des)

Chapbook, Derek Beaulieu, 16 pgs, above/ground press, abovegroundpress.blogspot.com, $5

1969: Belgian poet Marcel Broodthaers reimagines French poet Stéphane Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (1897), replacing all of its text with solid black bars. The homage is an attempt to amplify Mallarmé's inventive utilization of space.

2018: Derek Beaulieu takes Broodthaers' work and folds it, shifting the horizontal bars, he says, into "the hang and fold of sails on the mast... heaving beams and broken masts of a ship-wreck of meaning." Beaulieu's nautical approach is evidently inspired by Mallarmé's original, which was heavy on upheaval, shipwrecks, and the movement of water.

This far removed from its original state, the altered Mallarmé material is more about associations, evolution, and performance than it is about poetry. If you're not willing to dive into the history of *tattered sails*, you're not getting much more than slanted black lines. As a standalone work, meaning is obscured — the value is in the voyage.

In circling back to the initial text thematically, Beaulieu has provided us a closing chapter — that we didn't know we needed — for a process that was launched 120 years ago. (Scott Bryson)

Souvenir #1

Zine, JM Francheteau, 22 pgs, @franchetoast

Here's a literary double-header from JM Francheteau: the first issue of the zine *Souvenir*.

In the opener, "Real life," we have some self-reflection in the form of conceptual gymnastics.

Francheteau performs exploratory surgery on writers' practice of symbolism, skewering the resulting distance from the everyday reality of the writer's own life as well as the reader's. But it isn't a critique of writing, per se; Francheteau is talking about himself, and his struggle to write honestly and authentically about his connection with his father after many years of separation and silence. The layers of Francheteau's grappling peel back as the piece goes on, landing on wise insight into the circularity of the struggle writers have with subjective, personal experience. Is it life, or is it art? And are those categories mutually exclusive?

The second piece, the poem "There is no physical copy", is perhaps a practical exercise in what has just been explored in the preceding prose. It briskly marks off chapters of Francheteau's life, as a kind of framework, before turning confessional. My own confession: I got lost. Maybe it was the whiskey, or maybe it was my inexperience as a reader of poetry. Either way, I wanted to hang but could not. Nevertheless, Francheteau, you are interesting and I want to read more of your shit. (Joshua Barton)

EXCERPT

FROM **Fake Bands** BY **Isabella Laird**

KRAM

A 96-person a cappella EDM band from the early 2000s. The group's genesis occurred at a high school rave held in a balloon factory, during which all of KRAM's future members contributed to a sick a cappella beat when the power cut out. Their most popular song, "JAMMED," has been featured in the soundtracks of over 40 films. Though the group recently broke up, all 96 members remain firm friends.

reviewed on page 46

FME:

15 Years of Supporting the Weird in the Middle of Nowhere

By Shelby Monita

Festival Musique Émergente (FME) is a music festival in rural Northern Quebec that has been giving the artist, freaks and freaky artists of Canada a place to play. Celebrating 15 years this summer, FME threw yet another fun weekend full of the unexpected to close out summer on Labour Day weekend. I spoke with Jenny Thibault, Vice President, Communications and Marketing Director about the path FME is on.

How long have you been with FME?
Since the beginning! My friends and I were tired to go to Montreal or TO to see good music concerts. So, we had this crazy idea late in 2002, and we did the first edition in our hometown in September 2003, with 22 bands.

The best way I can describe FME is a festival for the Canadian underground and obscure. How would you describe it?
It's an indie music festival with a lineup of 75 artists running in a small mining town. We are a multi-venue festival with more than 20 venues all over the city, one central outside stage, and pop-up shows happening everywhere: In a garage, a backyard, on a lake, etc. To accomplish this, we have more than 300 volunteers. The local community is very involved and you can feel the vibe of the festival all across the city.

What sort of advantages are there to having a festival in Northern Quebec verses having it in a big city like Montreal?
I think it's a mix of distance, remoteness, music enthusiasts, and passion. Every venue is located into a walking distance. There is also a natural selection. Only real music fans would drive seven hours to go see some concerts in a small isolated town. All these passionate people converge towards Rouyn-Noranda for four days of intensive music and party!

For the past eight years, FME has been focused on being environmentally responsible. Can you talk more about your efforts?
Yes, it's something very important for us. We are composting everything. We use reusable glass, recycling papers, and carbon offset.

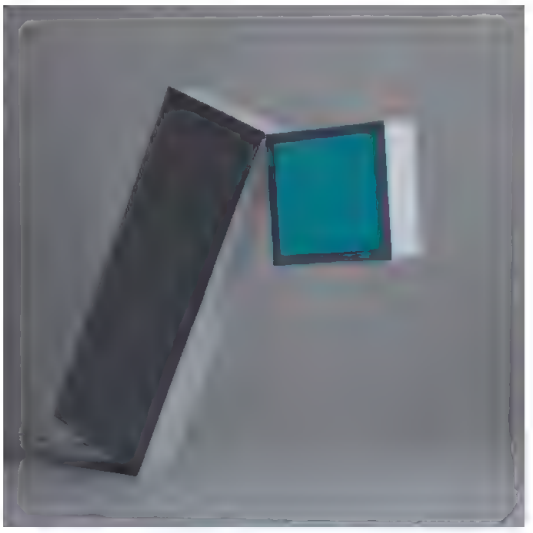
Are there any performances that stick out in your mind?
We are building a lot of memorable souvenirs. It's our trademark: GSYBE playing in a church at midnight. Richard Desjardins on a stage on the lake. A Tribe Called Red at the opening night last year by -2 degrees. Pop up shows in a convenience store, in a garage, in the commercial centre. Random Recipe playing at 2 am at the 24-hour poutine restaurant, John Spencer and his project Heavy Trash in a basement. Owen Pallet making everyone's dance at the closing event...

After 15 years as a festival, what does the future of FME look like?
Good question! The concept of emergence is something very conceptual and always evolving. Therefore, this is why we don't have a strategic development plan for the upcoming years. We want to be agile and continue to propose new and innovative musical experiences that will touch people and reach new audiences. bp

SHiFT FROM THA 902

SHiFT FROM THA 902 LP
Independent
shiftfromtha902.bandcamp.com

Cape Breton Island's Todd Googoo is at odds with himself. He doggedly reps for his home turf — We'koqma'q First Nation — but his gaze is focused forward and outward, his thoughts repeatedly turning to the future and to "getting out." His style clashes with expectations, too: piano, guitar, and orchestral flourishes mingle with thumping beats and deck scratches. His lyrics follow current trends in hip-hop — like wearing vulnerabilities on your sleeve — but remain firmly rooted in old school motifs, like "chillin' all day" (and smokin' all night). Through all the contradictions, he's adamant about one truth, "Life is such an uppercut."



Bodega

Endless Scroll
What's Your Rupture?
whatsyourrupture.bandcamp.com

Bands that write songs about themselves — "Bodega Birth" in this case — typically have the goods to back up their cocksureness. Bodega seal the deal with Wire-like post-punk and a lighthearted swagger, as they unearth the meaning in mundane activities (like collecting moving boxes from the liquor store), and ruminate on our most modern affliction: "All day at work: stare at computer. Come home from work: stare at computer." The satire is obvious, but apt, and there's an unexpected tenderness hiding beneath their Brooklynite angst. Debuts are rarely this incisive.

L CON

Insecurities in Being
Wildlife Sanctuary Sound
lcon.bandcamp.com

Something is coming for Lisa Conway. The song titles on her second L CON full-length suggest she knows it: "There Was A Glow," "Light Come;" and "Some Sort Of Sign." She's ultimately hoping to be shown "the answer to being alright" (as if there's one concrete solution). Like in her other projects (Del Bel the most prominent), *Insecurities in Being* is adorned with saxophones and horns aplenty, but its primary vehicle is her voice. It's equal parts desolate and buoyant, turning from melodious to off-kilter on a dime. This is avant-garde pop for wayward souls. (All reviews by Scott Bryson)

FICTION

a, A Novel

Derek Beaulieu, 457 pgs, Jean Boîte Éditions, jean-boite.fr

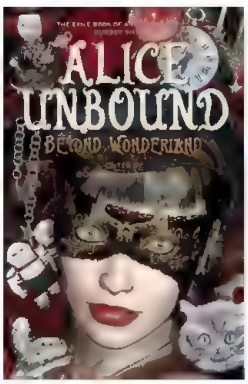
I've never read a book quite like *a, A Novel* by Derek Beaulieu. The book takes Andy Warhol's original work and deletes all the text, leaving behind punctuation marks, onomatopoeic words and typists' insertions.

When I started reading the book, I had no idea how I was going to review it. There are no characters, no dialogue or descriptions to get a sense of the writing style, and, most importantly, there is no plot.

But as I kept reading, I started to create my own story. In my interpretation, it takes place in New York City in someone's apartment. This someone really enjoys opera and is musical. Oh, and really likes to talk on the phone. There were some hectic moments in the middle with a lot of noise and action, and at one point, there's a "SMACK" followed by a suspicious "unintelligible garble." I mean, spoiler alert, but I think someone was just kidnapped.

In all seriousness, this book was such a unique reading experience. It felt like I was interpreting an abstract piece of art where the work could be analyzed in different ways. You can interpret the pages through the punctuations, comments, and sounds left behind. There are times when pages with a lot of periods, quotations, and sounds slowly transitions to pages almost devoid of punctuation and noise, and this had an odd effect of going from chaos to calm, from loud to quiet.

Beaulieu has turned a novel into a piece of art. Read it, use your imagination and you can come up with your own epic story. (Jana Gregorio)



Alice Unbound

Colleen Anderson, 308 pgs, Exile Editions Limited, ExileEditions.com, $24.95

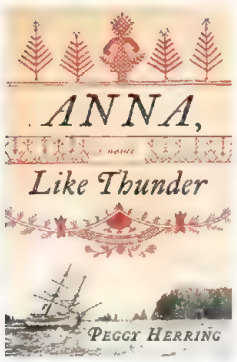
You don't have to be mad to enjoy the stories that make up Coleen Anderson's solo curatorial debut. *Alice Unbound* features short stories from 24 authors, all drawing inspiration from Lewis Carroll's classic, *Alice in Wonderland.*

I thought the collection was pretty wonderful — the stories were interesting and well-curated, and you would be hard-pressed not to find a story that didn't tickle your fancy.

Colleen Anderson was right when she wrote "to say each piece in this anthology is only about the forces of madness, or only about metamorphosis would be a disservice" to the talented authors included in this collection — but, at the same time, it is easy to find similarities in theme and message throughout the series. This is what makes this anthology so good. Anderson avoids falling into the trap of adhering too closely to the core idea that shaped the collection. It is easy to see how the stories connect, but each one is different enough that the *Alice in Wonderland* premise doesn't feel too repetitive.

However, while Anderson's curatorial skills are top notch, I would ask more from her in terms of editing. The best short stories are efficient, self-contained universes They leave the reader with enough information to infer what isn't written, or with a clear understanding that the ending is purposely ambiguous. Several stories in this collection felt like chapters in longer novels. Those authors would have benefitted from the skills of an experienced editor who could help them build on the strong bones of their stories.

All that said, each story left me falling into the dizzying depths of my own imagination. That alone makes this anthology well worth your time. (Vishmayaa Jeyamoorthy)



Anna, Like Thunder

Peggy Herring, 384 pgs, Brindle & Glass, brindleandglass.com, $22

In 1808, the *St. Nikolai*, a Russian ship, crashed on the coast of Washington state, stranding 22 Russians, one of which was Anna Petrovna Bulygia, 18-year-old amateur astronomer and wife to the ship's navigator. According to historical records, they were enslaved by Indigenous peoples. These are all the historical records that Peggy Herring has to craft Anna's story in *Anna, Like Thunder.* As months pass, Anna, separated from her family and home, begins to learn the customs of the Indigenous

peoples she lives and works with — and grows to love them.

Anna, who begins the novel very childlike, naïve and focused only on herself, experiences a year and half of growth and critical reflection. When she is finally reunited with her husband and other crewmembers, her new-found love for the land and the peoples that inhabit it are all too apparent. After her husband mentions the fat seals he and others go hunting for, he salivates on the thought of Russians hunting every last seal. Anna reflects on the horrible impact that it would have on the Indigenous peoples, thinking to herself, "where would they get the shells and teeth and claws and whiskers and skins and stomachs and intestines — to make their knives and tools..." And more importantly "What would they eat instead?" Through Anna's emotional narrations and personal journey, Herring crafts a page turner that does not disappoint. (Daniela Barrera Murcia)

Dead Clown Blues

R. Daniel Lester, 148 pgs, Shotgun Honey, shotgunhoney.com, $11.95

The first installment of Winner R. Daniel Lester's Carnegie Fitch Myster Fiasco series is a classic noir story. The 2018 Indie Writers' Deathmatch semi-finalist's newest book tells of Carnegie Fitch, a private eye in Vancouver, 1957. This is mystery right out of the Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler playbook, except lazier.

Our protagonist, Fitch, does not have an actual private eye license, nor an office to bear his name. Not even a rundown bungalow is shabby enough, Fitch is behind on rent at a boarding house as we learn on page five.

The rest of the novel runs this gamut. There's Adora Carmichael our villain and resident brunette, "built like a coke bottle," some tough guys, in this case violent clowns known as the "dead clowns," and other genre-specific accoutrements.

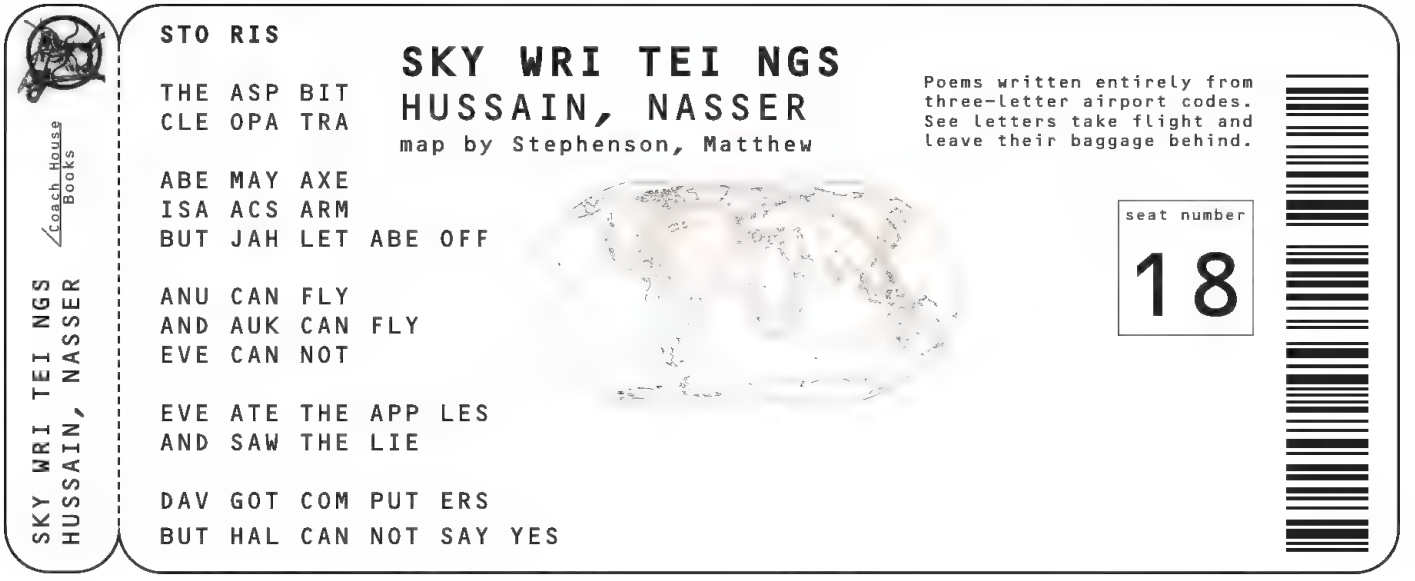
Even so, this novel can take your breath away. For example, right as you think this book is lagging, Fitch happens upon the home of a criminal that he's been tracking and he is struck in the head closing chapter 10. Then, Lester smacks you in the face with Chapter 11.

In the time Fitch is unconscious, the reader is shown his dreams which are scored by the sound of Church bells ringing as "a mother and her son walk along Pender Street." This chapter only spans pages 81-83, but in this space,

EXCERPT

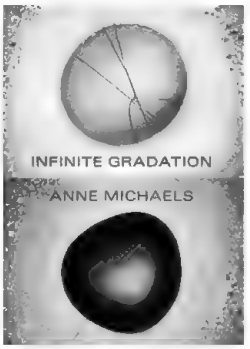
FROM **SKY WRI TEI NG** BY **Nasser Hussain**

(FORTHCOMING FROM COACH HOUSE BOOKS THIS FALL)


SKY WRI TEI NGS
HUSSAIN, NASSER
Coach House Books
STO RIS
THE ASP BIT
CLE OPA TRA
ABE MAY AXE
ISA ACS ARM
BUT JAH LET ABE OFF
ANU CAN FLY
AND AUK CAN FLY
EVE CAN NOT
EVE ATE THE APP LES
AND SAW THE LIE
DAV GOT COM PUT ERS
BUT HAL CAN NOT SAY YES
SKY WRI TEI NGS
HUSSAIN, NASSER
map by Stephenson, Matthew
Poems written entirely from three-letter airport codes. See letters take flight and leave their baggage behind.
seat number
18

Lester weaves a story about two parents not meant to stay together. How this makes that son, who's really Fitch, take off "to find adventure, to ride the rails."

This brief glimpse into the psychology of Fitch allows a substantially deeper connection between the reader and the character — allowing the story to seem truer, less uninventive. That is not to say Lester fails in any regard, it just felt (despite the presence of a clown posse) already done before. It would've been great to see more development of Fitch and his psyche. (Clayton Tomlinson)



Infinite Gradation

Anne Michaels, 88 pgs, Exile Editions, exileeditions.com, $19.95

Confident that "morality is a muscle," and that the mystery of life is better addressed by living than by knowing, Toronto poet laureate and award-winning novelist Anne Michaels has put forward a small book with enormous scope. Less a study or argument than a meditation in the midst of death, *Infinite Gradation* succeeds in its unique means of "plac[ing] one mystery next to another." By composing across and between genres — including fragments of prose fiction, art criticism, philosophical aphorism, and lyric verse, all masterfully executed — Michaels allows us to dwell in her vision at the same time we are exposed to it, making *Infinite Gradation* both inspirational and palliative in itself.

The power of Michaels' writing derives from its sentiment, style, and critical insight, not from research or logic.

EXCERPT

FROM **SKY WRI TEI NG** BY **Nasser Hussain**

(FORTHCOMING FROM COACH HOUSE BOOKS THIS FALL)

PAY DAY

SHE LOW.
GOT HOT GIG
BUT NOT MOE PAY
BIG WAD? NAW.

GOT TNA AND MBA
GOT TIP JAR TRI CKS
AND CAN EKE OUT ONE DOL LAR PER DAY

ANY WAY
SHE CAN

NOT FUN VAC ATI ONS FOR HER
FAR FAR OFF (SHE GOT KIN IN PAT TER SON, BUT…
)

AND THO THE ADS
SAY 'BUY'
SHE GOT MAX NOT.

THE ROT TEN BOS
REP ITI TIV ELY
SQU EZE AND SQU EZE AND SQU EZE HER SUM ORE

TIL HER BOD POP.

Approached as a work of non-fiction, then, *Infinite Gradation* has its limitations. Michaels's deliberations on poetry and prose, for example, despite being refreshing and often brilliant in themselves, make clear that *Infinite Gradation* is a book about living *and* writing — never one without the other. Moreover, her focus on artists deeply influenced by the events of World War II roots her ideas in a distinctly European tradition of 20th-century art making.

But even without adopting Michaels' worldview, I found myself thoroughly and exuberantly immersed in her thought. Michaels' voice is penetrating and compassionate, and it is a marvel to see her ideas expressed with such artistry. Meanwhile, those writers and artists (of whom I'm sure there are many) who have committed themselves wholeheartedly to Michaels' vision will discover in *Infinite Gradation* an invaluable source of consolation and clarity. (John Nyman)

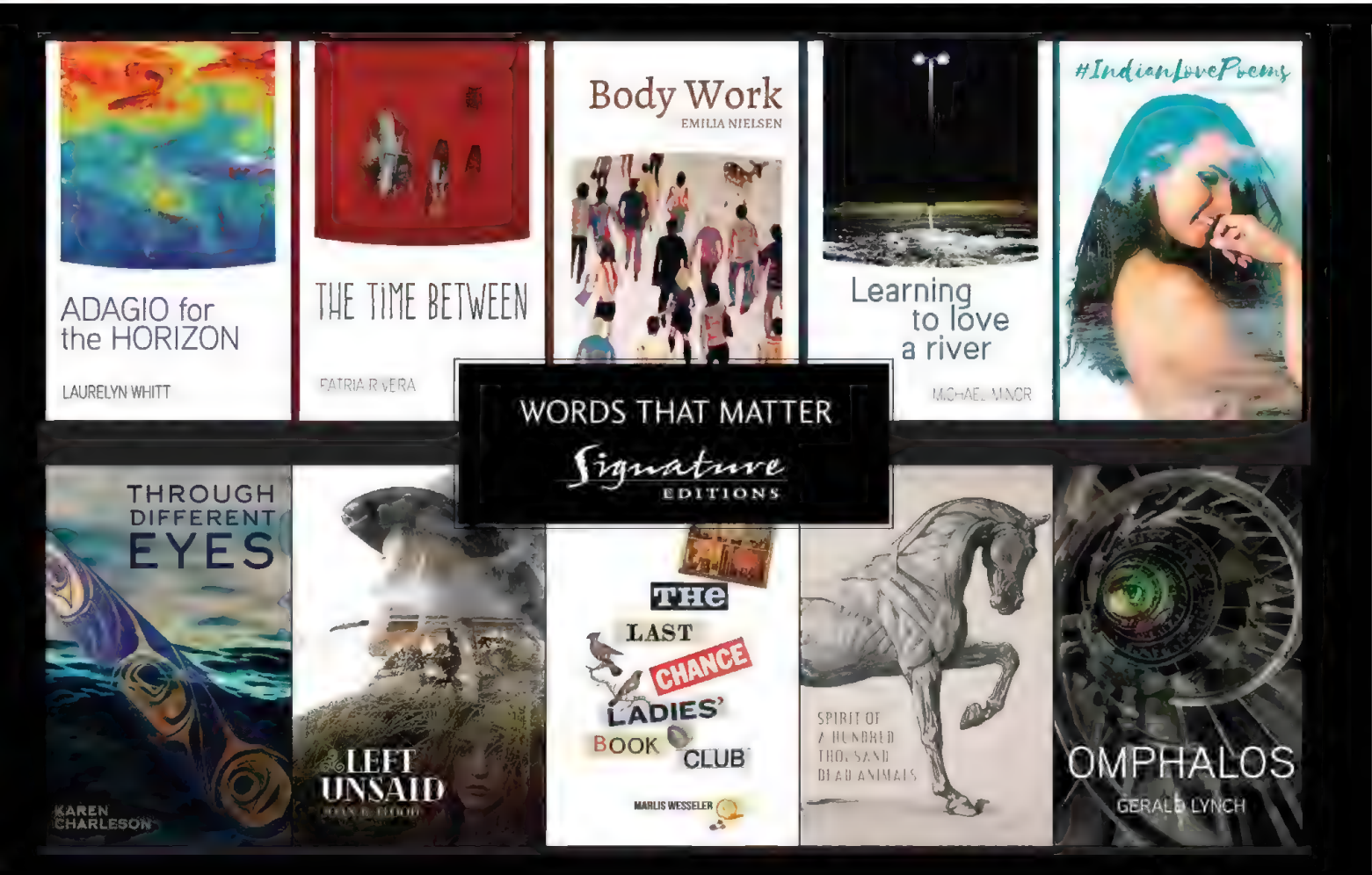
Q2Q: Queer Canadian Performance Texts

Dickinson, Gatchalian, Oliver & Singh, eds., 312 pgs, Playwrights Canada Press, playwrightscanada.com, $29.95

Anthologizing seven contemporary Canadian performance pieces, *Q2Q* investigates "what makes queer performance queer." The editors strive to reflect diversity in "gender, geographical, and racial representation" in their selections, though they note that a single volume must necessarily leave many gaps. Nevertheless, *Q2Q* serves as an engaging snapshot of contemporary Canadian queer theatre.

The pieces in *Q2Q* are not very diverse, though, in terms of content: each explores a particular facet of queer identity through work focused on personal histories. On the more traditional end of the spectrum is Shawn Wright's *Ghost Light*, an involving solo show about a gay man and his memories of his glamorous but aging Catholic Acadian mother Regina. Meanwhile work like d'bi.young anitafrika's *androgyne*, set alternately in Jamaica and Toronto, seems less traditional, deploying poetry, dance, movement, and other media, but at its heart this too is about the daily travails of queer folks as we feel our way through a hetero-patriarchal world.

The work is all solid, all worth reading, staging, or seeing. At the same time, *Q2Q* doesn't include any one piece that really stands out — nothing that seems essential, unmissable, or likely to enter the capital-R Repertoire. Books like this are still important: they record and



disseminate ideas that might otherwise not be preserved. Rather than for the casual reader, *Q2Q* will be most appreciated by scholars, critics, or others with a deep, pre-existing investment in this material. (Andrew Woodrow-Butcher)

Through Different Eyes

Karen Charleson, 226 pgs, Signature Editions, signature-editions.com, $19.95

Love triangles, teenage pregnancy, (not so) secret affairs, a baby abandoned on doorsteps — with all this drama and more plot twists, you would think I was talking about a *telenovela* and not Karen Charleson's first novel.

Through Different Eyes follows the Joe family, who live in a fictional Kitsum, a small fishing Indigenous town north of Vancouver. While teenage Brenda worries about her pregnancy, her aunt Monica returns for Christmas to help confront the local man that Brenda was involved with. Monica, who just left her long-term Vancouver boyfriend, is conflicted when meeting the attractive loner that Brenda was involved with. Meanwhile, Brenda's mother, Ruby, deals with the multiple rumours that her husband Martin had an affair. As more family secrets and betrayals are exposed, and rumours begin to spread, the Joe family begins to unravel.

Charleson expertly uses an omniscient narrator to show us a glimpse of not just Brenda and Monica's perspectives, but also Nona's, the Joes' elderly neighbour who just can't help herself from spreading rumours. Even if the focus is the Joe family drama, Charleson doesn't shy away from political comments. When they open the first elementary school in Kitsum, which was severely underfunded, Monica is determined to be "good enough that she would never have to go back to the Indian Residential School ever again." The matter of fact tone of these sparing critiques don't detract from the story, instead they leave readers to contemplate the conditions of Indigenous peoples in Canada.

While the first few chapters draw out a bit slowly, once the drama starts for Brenda, Monica, and Ruby, the action unfolds and quickly snowballs, making *Through Different Eyes* impossible to put down. (Daniela Barrera Murcia)

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We All Need to Eat

*Alex Leslie, Book*hug, bookthug.ca, $20*

We All Need to Eat is a collection of nine linked short stories following the life and family of Soma, a queer woman in Vancouver, ranging in time between Soma's childhood through to her adulthood. Leslie's stories are a process of enfolding. Covering weightlifting, suicide, Jewish identity, queerness, and more, the collection's stories connect through recurring characters and places, and imbued with repetitions such as the phrase and ways in which "People are people are people."

The book contains a clear reverence for elders and those who have passed before her, and unpacks Soma's relationships to mourning, loss, and mental illness with her brother, current day ex-partner, mother, and friend who commits suicide.

Two themes resonate throughout the book. The first is Soma's father's saying that "If anything terrible happens, treat yourself to a nice meal," which plays out in Soma's connection to food preparation as a Subway sandwich artist and cooking. The second, Leslie's exploration of the Ashkenzai tradition of naming a child, which involves "tak[ing] the initials of their dead relative and us[ing] them again and again so that the letters are never lost."

A stand-out story is "Who You Start With is Who You Finish With," which juxtaposes Soma's story with her grandmother, Charna's, when she was Soma's age. Charna, having made it safely to Canada from Ukraine, looks at how her shul is affected by the developing Holocaust, and the repercussions she suffers because of her choice to marry a non-Jew. Meanwhile, Soma mourns Charna on the fifth yahrzeit, or anniversary of her death. She realizes she has booked a vacation with her partner during the yahrzeit and has to deal with the mourning rites and her partner, all while obsessing over media coverage of the alt right's rise in our time.

Leslie's prose is fluid, occasionally leaving this reader lightheaded. Nearly each story feels like a narrative experiment, and at times the narrative is overtaken by her interest in breathless lyricism. Leslie's weaving of the stories deepens the reader's understanding and interest in Soma with each story, leaving one full. (Fiona Raye Clarke)

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ZEEN101

COMICS

100 Days in Uranium City

Ariane Dénommé, 144 pgs, Conundrum Press, conundrumpress.com, $18

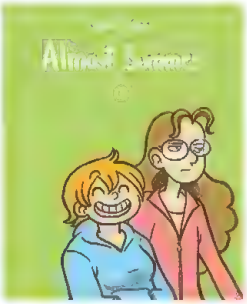
This book presents a bleak tale of man (yes, specifically *man*, as it is a very male-centered story) and his struggle against an ancient, horrible nemesis: shitty jobs. Taking place mostly in a 70s mining town, *100 Days in Uranium City* is a realistic look at the daily struggles of mine workers.

Before leaving town for his first lengthy shift at Uranium City, Daniel reassures his girlfriend, Carole, that "a hundred days sounds long, but it'll go by fast." Unfortunately for the gentlemen stuck working in the mines, every day is a horrible, repetitive slog.

The artwork (all rendered in greyscale pencil tones) is fairly simplistic, though the characters each have unique and memorable looks. I particularly liked the visual design of Richard, who appears as though he just came out of a certain yellow submarine. I found the character designs to be quite charming, almost cute, though never to the point where they seemed overly cartoonish or out of place in the serious storyline.

I quite liked the background art as well, ranging from peaceful forest and river scenes to the dark and claustrophobic mine interior, the worker's helmet lights providing the only source of illumination in the gloomy caves.

Overall, I definitely enjoyed this book. It offers a glimpse into a very specific lifestyle, career and time in history that I have not often read about in graphic novels. *100 Days in Uranium City* is worth reading for a peek into this harsh, lonely way of life. (Tina Olah)



Almost Summer (Vol. 1-4)

Sophie Bédard, Pow Pow Press, powpowpress.com, $22.95 ea, four volumes

It's a webcomic fan's dream to find a completed series to binge read from start to

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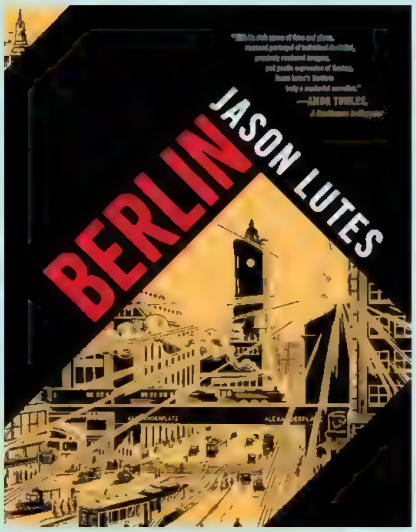
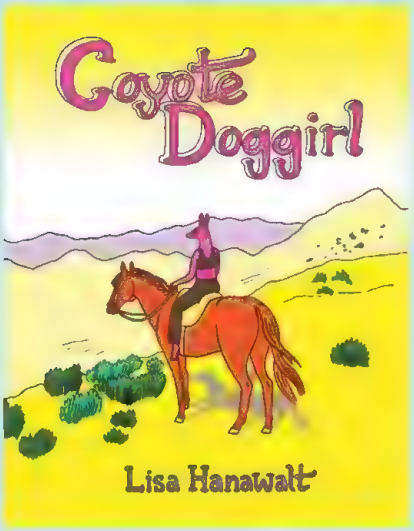


BERLIN
Jason Lutes
History remains timely in this epic about 1930s Germany



COYOTE DOGGIRL
Lisa Hanawalt
From the *BoJack Horseman* producer and production designer

WOMAN WORLD
Aminder Dhaliwal
A riotously funny book about a worla with no men

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finish. No waiting for weekly updates, no refreshing your browser over and over again. Which is why I was excited when I got my hands on all four printed volumes of Sophie Bédard's *Almost Summer* — freshly translated to English with the last volume just released by Pow Pow Press this fall.

Set in small-town Quebec, this slice-of-life comic follows a group of teens through their last two years in high school.

The series centres around best friends and total opposites, Emily and Michelle. Emily is mistrustful and reserved, and lives alone with her unloving, alcoholic mother. The bubbly and friendly Michelle is a downright hedonist with poor impulse control. They put each other down regularly, so I often found myself wondering: why are they even friends? The best answer I could come up with was the one Emily offers near the beginning: "We're just used to being around each other. She sort of showed up in my life one day and kinda... never really left." Good enough, I guess. The dynamic wasn't exactly a deal-breaker, but it's certainly a head-scratcher.

I was surprised to learn Bédard started the French webcomic when she was 19 back in 1999, considering the quality of the first volume. That being said, it was a real highlight watching Bédard's storytelling and characterization evolve over the course of four volumes. Michelle is a hedonist to the end, but the way Emily grows more trusting and relaxed within herself was heartening to read. Bédard weaves in new characters — a favourite of mine is good guy Anthony — and draws in new depth, which made the last volume my favourite.

Judging by Bédard's online portfolio (sbedard.com) she's got some exciting projects up her sleeve that feature a more diverse lineup of characters and subjects. I'd love to see more of her work translated into English. (Anisa Rawhani)

By the Forces of Gravity

Rebecca Fish Ewan, 397 pgs, Books by Hippocampus, books.hippocampusmagazine.com, $24

Rebecca Fish Ewan's poignant graphic memoir will transport you to a time of bell-bottom jeans and platform shoes. *By the Forces of Gravity* recounts a devastating tragedy in Ewan's childhood through cartoons and free verse. Set in Berkeley, CA., in the '70s, the book starts with 12-year-old Ewan on a road trip where she first meets her "soul friend" Luna. After

When you're not super, it is a tough world.

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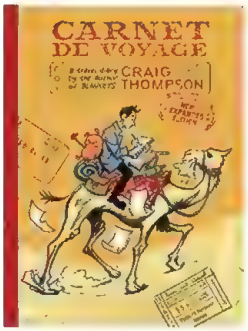
tripping on acid, the pair forge a deep connection ("I feel like we become so close / Our souls connect / I wish we had a song" and become inseparable. Thus, their story begins.

Perhaps the most jarring aspect of this memoir is the fact that as a 12-year-old, Ewan was already experimenting with drugs, dropping out of school, dating much older boys and living away from home. At one point she moves into a kids' commune with the full support of her father. But despite her extraordinary circumstances, many can relate to having that one special friend you'd do anything for, the one who has a big influence on your life.

Ewan's writing style is touching, humorous and full of teen angst. The simplistic drawings are charming and are paired perfectly with the verses. I actually would have preferred more art and fewer words. I had a hard time engaging with the story up until about halfway through. I felt like the book took a while to get to the point. A lot of verses were repetitive, and in 397 pages, the story could have been shorter.

In the end, I was completely taken in by the friendship. "We are soul friends / That's a forever thing." *By the Forces of Gravity* is a beautiful love letter to a dear, dear friend. (Jana Gregorio)



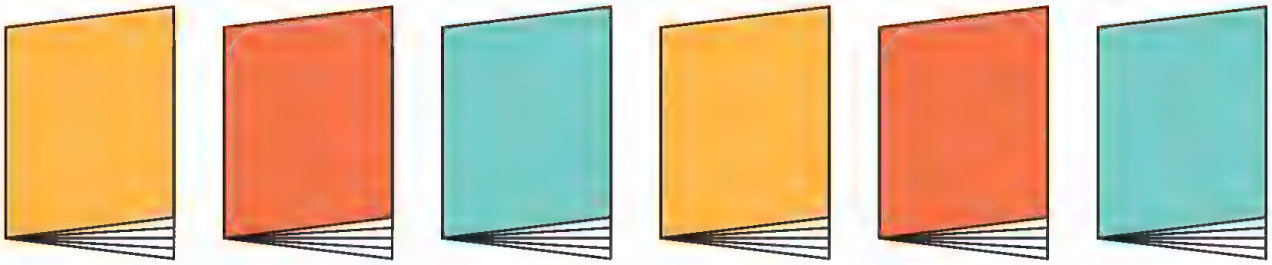
Carnet de Voyage

Craig Thompson, 256 pgs, Drawn and Quarterly, drawnandquarterly.com, $24.95.

Travelling alone can be daunting and exhausting, as Craig Thompson quickly realized during his almost four-month tour of Europe. After the success of his critically acclaimed graphic novel *Blankets,* Thompson embarks on a book tour. During his journey in France, Morocco, Spain, Thompson kept a sketch log that would eventually become *Carnet de Voyage.* Thompson revised his 2004 graphic novel in 2018 with an epilogue, reflecting on his previous travels, as well as divulging to the reader the reason for his need to record everything, even with his crippled hand.

Thompson does not sugar-coat his travels and often complains about how much he hates the trip, how sick, homesick, and heartbroken he is. While the narrative of this graphic memoir isn't its strong point, Thompson captures the intricate layers of different cities and landscapes, and this redeems the text.

As a first-time reader of *Carnet de Voyage*, but not of Thompson, I couldn't help but get frustrated by his incessant complaints. Travelling alone doesn't have to be the life-changing journey



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that everyone expects it to be — sometimes it's okay to sit in your hotel and be overwhelmed by the entire experience. Culture shock is a real thing after all! Thompson's constant self-deprecating comments and complaints are often frustrating, but Thompson isn't oblivious to this. He has a travel mascot and conscience, Zacchaeus, reprimand Thompson's character by telling him that he's "just whiny & egocentric & somehow oblivious to the REAL suffering outside" of himself because it's "an American trait." Thompson's recognition of the futility of his problems reassures us that Thompson isn't out of touch with reality, and he is just a human struggling with his own self-deprecation, anxiety, and sadness. (Daniela Barrera Murcia)

Forward

Lisa Maas, 200 pgs, Arsenal Pulp Press, arsenalpulp.com, $21.95

Sex, dating, and those first kiss butterflies in your stomach are all things that are for young, straight people only — or at least that's what a lot of pop culture would have us believe. *Forward*, the new graphic novel from writer and artist Lisa Maas, challenges those assumptions with a moving and lushly illustrated story about two 40-something lesbians struggling to find fulfilling connections in BC.

Maas writes characters who are living, breathing human beings, and it's a pleasure to read her snappy dialogue. Rayanne, a woman with a successful career but a less-than-successful love life, resists being set up by her friends and coworkers, but longs for someone to share her life with. Meanwhile, Ali is emerging from the fog of having recently lost her wife, and is unsure of how best to move on — if at all. Moments of quiet lust, loneliness, and alienation are all captured in ways that make Ali and Rayanne feel familiar, making their journeys navigating their lives all the more compelling.

Maas's art is first pencilled and then inked and painted, and her eye for colours is keen. Every scene feels intimate, and Maas does an exceptional job of capturing the mood of each little moment. Though it can be difficult at times to differentiate between Maas's faces — many of the characters share similar features and haircuts — it rarely has an effect on the impact of the scenes, and it's a joy to look at.

The strength of *Forward* is its ability to make characters who do not normally find themselves in the spotlight feel like

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"What exactly makes Canadians funny? This effort from long-standing independent press Exile Editions takes a wry look at what makes us laugh and what makes us laughable." —*Toronto Star*
Margaret Atwood, Austin Clarke, Leon Rooke, Priscila Uppal, Jonathan Goldstein, Paul Quarrington, Linda Rogers, Morley Callaghan, Jacques Ferron, Joe Rosenblatt, Barry Callaghan, Andrew Borkowski, Helen Marshall, Gloria Sawai, Steven Hayward, David McFadden, Myna Wallin, Louise Maheux-Forcher, Marty Gervais, Shannon Bramer, Aislin, and 20 more…

In lines as precise and profound as any Michaels has written, *Infinite Gradation* is a lyrically compelling praise-song to love and the enduring mysteries at the core of existence. Michaels considers the lives of certain artists and writers – Paul Celan, Jack Chambers, Eva Hesse, Etty Hillesum, Nelly Sachs and Claire Wilks – who have made work at the limits of experience, in remarkably different situations. Asking urgent questions, she explores how art might serve as a witness *in extremis*, and she examines the nature of responsibility, and the form it takes in poetry, fiction and image-making when everything is at stake.

old friends or family. Most people have found themselves lonely at some point in their lives; *Forward* is a good reminder that we're all in this together. (Kris Bone)

Ghost Stories

Whit Taylor, 120 pgs, Rosarium Publishing, rosariumpublishing.com, $17.95

Sometimes, especially if you (like me) have a soft spot for mainstream comics, it can feel like graphic novels are dominated by work that is the equivalent of *Transformers 5*: all flashy visuals and slick production values, with no trace of heart whatsoever. Thankfully, creators like Whit Taylor are here to help remind us what is possible when cartoonists are able to be emotionally honest in their work.

Ghost Stories, Taylor's most recent collection, comprises three short stories dealing with relationships, trauma, and family. From the struggles of overcoming a sexual assault to the difficulties of navigating a changing friendship as years pass, Taylor treats her characters with the nuance and care that they deserve, and creates multi-faceted, engaging narratives. The stories feel particularly intimate, an effect accentuated by her art — in an era of digital illustrations, Taylor's work retains its handmade personality, marker lines and all.

Of the three, my favourite piece was "Wallpaper," the story of a home and of growing up in it, as told via a selection of anecdotes accompanied by careful, close-up illustrations of different surfaces and wallpaper patterns. Taylor's attention to detail when recreating white lace, autumn leaves, and Victorian peonies is strangely endearing, and lends the story a peculiar kind of weight.

Ghost Stories feels like a quiet moment apart from the thunder and lightning of the world these days, and I think we can all use a few more of those. (Kris Bone)

Shit is Real

Aisha Franz, 287 pgs, Drawn & Quarterly, drawnandquarterly.com, $27.95

I began Aisha Franz's *Shit is Real* prepared for some heavy topics, but it was less of an exploration of how rough life can be and more of a testament to how your emotions can blur reality. Taking on everything from breakups and technology, to fish life and peepholes, the graphic novel has a simple black and white style that surprised me with its ability to pull off detailed futuristic party scenes and abstract dream sequences.

Shit is Real follows Selma, who gets unceremoniously dumped, takes her few possessions (including a painting of the book's title) and moves into an empty apartment to sleep on a mattress on the floor. Through desert visions and stilted check-ins with her friend Yumi, you learn that she's left her job and isn't feeling the need to re-enter working society just yet, and you watch her struggle through modern challenges like ordering off of holographic menus. Some coincidences and some low-key stalking help her to start living in her absent neighbour's apartment, trespassing on someone else's life and seeming happy and present the more she intrudes.

A truly weird trip through one woman's depression and escapism, I was pleased with how much *Shit is Real* became about perspective, ups and downs, and female friendship. After reading it in one sitting, I expect to revisit it, mainly to enjoy a lonely and inappropriate, but still stubborn and motivated protagonist, how many pages have little to no dialogue, and my own interpretations of some of the more out-there sequences. (Carolyn Turgeon)

Squelette

Philippe Shewchenko, 84 pgs, Éditions Trip Comix, editionstrip.tumblr.com, $20

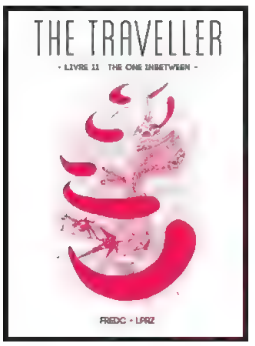
Plug your headphones in and let the soundtrack of Philippe Shewchenko's first comic book carry you into a menacing forest filled with keys, doors, skeletons, and other fantastically creepy creatures that speak in a coded language of symbols. *Squelette* not only comes with a soundtrack, but also with a lexicon to decipher the skeleton language.

Shewchenko's black, white, and yellow illustrations create intricate and gritty dreamscapes not bound by gravity, where skeletons and other creatures move through the forest, attempting not to get killed. It's not all grim though, as Shewchenko integrates music throughout the comic, music which brings the skeletons and ghosts alive through dance.

In the last two pages, Shewchenko breaks from the coded language and narrates, in French, the strange experience that a skeleton had in this forest. As the skeleton watches the ghosts dancing, it articulates the overall feeling that Squelette has on readers: "En fait, je ne sais pas comment expliquer l'expérience... La nuit est étrange. La nuit est belle" ("Actually, I don't know how to explain this experience... The night is strange. The night is beautiful.")

The problem, however, when reading this comic is the difficulty of deciphering the symbols with the lexicon. Each symbol not only has three or four different possible meanings, but the way that Shewchenko arranges the symbols in the panels makes them incredibly challenging to match and decipher. After I tired of attempting to understand every single panel that included symbols, and focused on the visual narrative, the story really came alive.

The strength of Shewchenko's storytelling power really comes through the careful composition of the panels as well as the attention to detail of his illustrations. A challenging and trippy comic that rewards those that want to plunge into the depths of the forest. (Daniela Barrera Murcia)



The Traveller Livre II: The One Inbetween

FREDC & LPRZ, 108 pgs, TRIP comix & Éditions Moelle graphique, editionstrip.tumblr.com, $20

I've probably had an existential crisis once a month for as long as I can remember. If we're going to be *really* honest, once a month seems like a stretch and once a week sounds a lot more accurate. *The Traveller* opened a whole new can of worms.

The second installment of this series brings an unnamed character to Amsterdam, to explore a metaphysical reality and chase down the ominous Dancer.

"And how desperate they set out to chase not a name but her naming," says the protagonist. I get it, unnamed character, I am also looking for constant reassurance and validation. This is a main theme throughout. The searching, the mystery, the yearning to understand more than what is. *The Traveller* touches on a part of the human experience that is not always pleasant to think about — and it forces you to really consider who are you and who are you meant to be. Or maybe I'm looking too hard for meaning. (This is the can of worms I was talking about earlier.)

The illustrations stand out above the story. FREDC uses every inch of the page to forward the action. The detail in his pointillism and linework reminds me of a contemporary Georges Seurat mixed with a little Picasso. I almost want to rip out pages to frame. While this may be classified as a graphic novel, I plan on using this as a coffeetable book. I'd rather look at the images than reassess my soul. (Arianna Cannarozzo)

Woman World

Aminder Dhaliwal, 256 pgs, Drawn & Quarterly, drawnandquarterly.com, $29.95

Men have gone extinct. Now what? Aminder Dhaliwal fleshes out a manless future in her deliciously comedic graphic novel *Woman World*. The comic follows the women of Beyonce's Thighs (that's the name of their district) as they navigate the survival of the human race. Despite a grim premise, the women of Beyonce's Thighs flourish. They organize town meetings, build hospitals, develop alternative methods of pregnancy, write poetry, fall in love, and discuss the intricacies of their futures.

A bunch of the strips offer a sharp and humorous critique of gender norms. In one instance, Naomi, a young resident of Beyonce's Thighs, spends an evening collecting razors for the community. When women approach her to ask for razors, Naomi replies, "sorry, no women's razors," but later settles down to reflect with some confusion, "I gotta figure out a way to unload these men's razors. They're useless." The beauty of gender-specific marketing.

Woman World also engages gender. In one town meeting, the women discuss images that would best reflect their collective. "We need a flag for our district." "How about a vagina?" one asks. "But vaginas don't represent the scope of womankind," another replies. Intersectionality becomes a major part of her storytelling. *Woman World* is an incredibly timely and pleasantly funny read. (Jean Mathew)

POETRY

Adagio for the Horizon

Laurelyn Whitt, 106 pgs, Signature Editions, signature-editions.com, $17.95

Split over five sections, Larelyn Whitt's new collection of 54 poems is the sermon at a wake for the environment.

That's not to say *Adagio for the Horizon* posits a dead Earth, or one beyond repair — rather, it frankly evaluates the world after many years of pollution, mass extinctions, and losses of habitat for many of its species, including, of course, our own.

The cover is an ominous heat map showing a brooding, deadly swath of red over much of the northern hemisphere. It's almost as artful as it is terrifying, a telling contrast.

The opening section has four poems each beginning "Tar Songs." It is our societal addiction to oil that Whitt connects with the dying off animals in these poems, a theme that plays out over the rest of the collection. She contrasts the ugliness of fossil fuel exploitation with the elegance of formal musical language, writing of "Syncrude," "a Hydrocarbon Concerto" and, more pointedly, "the Oiled Duck Symphony" at play.

A few stanzas later, in perhaps the most pointed declaration of the poetry within, Whitt says "Dross remains / after what we desire / is taken away." Humanity's skewed priorities ignore that beauty, the seeming art, in the "dross" that remains.

Many of the poems in the other four sections have dedications to artists or animals Whitt hopes to reevaluate. There is a

tribute to master stonewall artist Dan Snow. Then there is a poem on the extinct bird the great Auk, ironically hunted out of the world by the museum industry, along with references to wildlife photography.

All of this homage and juxtaposition aims at exploring the beauty of the Earth without the tendency to extinguish what has been observed. (Clayton Tomlinson)

Delet This

MLA Chernoff, 60 pgs, Hybrid Heaven, hybridheaven.co, $12

New Montreal press Hybrid Heaven's *Delet This* is a quick, funny read that fits the publisher's mandate to produce "work that speaks of the now."

In a debut collection, MLA Chernoff finds a tone that is simultaneously obnoxious and charming. Replete with emoji, text-message orthography, and purposely upsetting fonts, *Delet This* is the kind of anti-poetry many attempt, but few do well.

In the piece "might delet soon but felt cute in this pic," Chernoff posits a key tenet for the book: "th temporary tempts poetry." Indeed, *Delet This* positively drips with this year's internet, and the book will surely drift towards unintelligibility as its parade of meme-allusions and gossip lose their freshness. But this is a feature, not a bug. *Delet This* is an exercise in a certain type of provisional self-deprecation. Not of the personal kind, where unconfident shtick substitutes for humour – rather, *Delet This* constantly undoes itself, subverts its own momentum, and keeps us on edge. "it isnt a passage or a typo," Chernoff writes, "but a glitch: / slippy, slide, n glide / from *glitsh* to *glisser* / n back again".

The poems in *Delet This* don't amount to much — none stands out more than the other, none is particularly memorable on its own. But Chernoff is a very talented writer, whose smart-aleck style suggests that substance is overrated anyhow. (Andrew Woodrow-Butcher)

Safe Words

Michelle Brown, 80 pgs, Palimpsest Press, palimpsestpress.ca, $18.95

If there's one thing I learned from majoring in English, it's to not assume poetry is autobiographical. I did my best to follow that rule with *Safe Words*, but then I got to the acknowledgements, where Michelle Brown thanks her friends Kayla and Jessie for "finding me," a reference to the final poem in the book, "Stories."

Well, if there's one thing I learned from minoring in Philosophy (really set myself up for success in life, eh?), it's that you should question generalized rules.

Not every poem is autobiographical — surely not "Company Picnic," which the back cover points to as "a company man's complete undoing at his summer party" but which seems to me a little more ambiguous. But it's hard not to read one like "All the parties I've ever been to" — which features names found in the Acknowledgements and lines that read as lived experience — as at least somewhat based in reality.

"Based in reality" would be a better descriptor. "All the parties ..." is emotional and deals with what appears to be an out of control drinking habit, but a poem like "YouTube Commercial," of much lighter subject matter, also deals with a moment I expect most people have experience with. Who doesn't skip those damn ads? Though perhaps "Skip. / But I buy it" is the poem's most relatable line.

The way *Safe Words* handles these real-life moments, whether light-hearted or difficult and even when it exposes the darkness of otherwise mundane situations, is what I love most about it. It made me wonder just how personal some of these poems were. It made me re-read and rewarded every time I came back. (Pat Reddick)

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CLOSER

by Jason Arias

LIONEL WONDERED when exactly he had started positioning himself closer to people, to strangers, on purpose. On the city bus he would feel letdown if there was an open double seat waiting for him, because he'd have to take it, out of social expectation, and then he wouldn't be sitting next to anyone. He started riding the bus only during rush hour. Even if he had no place to be. Just to be forced to sit closely.

This was why Lionel started viewing films again in the theaters. He and Ethel would go when they were younger, but then she stopped wanting to go out, and then she grew sick and sicker.

He picked opening nights to see new films. And if the foot or leg or hand of a person sitting next to him accidentally grazed his, he would remain frozen in the exact position, hoping it would happen again — the hairs on his hand or leg or arm (whichever had been grazed) left standing at attention. He felt the proximity of each individual hair — the electricity there. He found himself paying closer attention to the space between him and everyone.

When Lionel wasn't riding buses or in crowded theatres (or at home alone with the ceramic angel collection that Ethel had loved so much, the kissing angels especially) he found small cafes or shared table sushi restaurants or waiting rooms in county-run facilities to occupy. Whether he had an appointment at the facility or not, he would walk into the lobby and sit down. He liked listening to the turning of pages, the hushed conversations. When he did have an appointment, he liked the dentist's chair. He liked the hygienist's shoulder or arm or breast grazing his head. Not that the breast was any better than the shoulder or the arm. It really wasn't. It wasn't a sickness. *He* wasn't sick. If anything, he was only lonely. And there was nothing morally wrong with loneliness. He considered putting an ad out for a roommate, but wasn't convinced he should. He didn't know if he'd like *that*. There might be undesired dialogue involved. Even if there wasn't, he might imagine that there should be, and he was certain he wouldn't

Illustration by Chelsea Watt

know what to say. Lionel was much more of a conversational voyeur. He liked to listen, not participate. The only person he still enjoyed conversing with was Ethel, at the cemetery on Holgate. And there, Ethel was always the voyeur. She couldn't help but be.

It wasn't until Lionel found himself using the middle of three urinals in the bathroom of a downtown bookstore, that he wondered if he'd purposely put himself in this compromising position. And why?

When Lionel had first entered the restroom all the urinals had been unoccupied, the entire bathroom had been unoccupied, and he'd told himself that he just *happened* to walk to the middle urinal — that his actions were absent-minded. But Lionel had known and practiced, correct urinal etiquette for his entire life, even after his proximity affliction. He deeply understood that you should try to put as much porcelain and hanging metal half-walls between piss streams as possible. An, for some reason, he hadn't done that this time.

Sitting next to someone on the bus or in the theatre was one thing, it was innocent, but pissing next to them was certainly another.

If someone walked in, with him peeing in the middle urinal, and wanted to pee as well (without having to aim into a toilet) that person would be forced to piss in one of the urinals directly on either side of him.

Lionel told himself that the giant bookstore wasn't very busy, that he'd be okay. But what if someone did come in? He couldn't just *wrap it up* all quick and nifty like the prostate of his younger years. And wouldn't that person suspect him of being a "close pisser," of being guilty of purposely positioning himself at the fulcrum urinal? What if they thought he was the kind of person that wanted to turn his head and speak directly into their ear, or glance down to see what they were "working with," or comment on the quality of the stream they were producing?

When Lionel was a child, his father had been a voracious bathroom commentator and Lionel had hated him for it.

"Look at you! You're pissing a rope, son!" his father would proudly proclaim to a restroom full of patrons at Fanny's Chicken Shack, or the ball game, or whatever public bathroom they happened to be in together. And it was true — Lionel *had* pissed ropes back then, but he'd always known it was strange for his father to comment on it. He'd try to hold it until they got home, but he was never able to. His father would tell him that that was the curse of having a man's urethra coupled with the bladder of a Girl Scout.

A *Girl Scout*, he'd said that.

Lionel wondered if he shouldn't just scoot over to the next urinal — what his father would have called "switching lanes" — just in case somebody did come in from the bookstore. But he was already going, and it didn't seem worth it or necessary to pinch off and reposition now. Plus, he was pretty sure nobody really cared what old people did. Nobody had cared what Ethel did toward the end. That she stopped smiling or making any sense. Only him.

Lionel was still staring at the wall in front of him, still thinking about *switching lanes*, when the bathroom door behind him opened and closed, and a bearded man—wearing a black T-shirt and green scarf—walked in. Lionel turned his head momentarily, gave a little nod, and immediately questioned this action. He didn't want to stand out. There were secret codes he didn't want to transmit. Maybe he shouldn't have done that. He wasn't his father. He wasn't passé about urinal pissing.

The bearded man paused for a second, then walked to the urinal to Lionel's right. The man smelled like mild sweat and sweet tobacco — like the thin cigars the neighbourhood kids smoked. He had a wallet-chain jangling from his back pocket that connected to a belt loop at the front of his jeans. He kind of bounced when he unzipped, and it sounded like a high school janitor laden heavy with keys echoing down the

hallways. The man put his right hand on his hip and his left hand on the wall, creating a fleshy barrier between himself and Lionel with his upper arm. Lionel wondered if this was a defense mechanism — some kind of genius deterrent to prevent conversations in moments like this. It was a smart move.

The man wore brown work boots with the boot toes purposely worn away. There was dulling metal beneath the brown suede. Lionel guessed the man's feet were probably shoulder width apart. Lionel looked down at the black and white checkered tiles below his running shoes. They were comfortable, but stained. Maybe too comfortable. He'd need a new pair.

He looked confident, this man that stood with his shoulders leaned back and his hips pushed slightly forward. The first word that came to Lionel's mind was, *Regal*. It was a strange word to use to describe urinal technique, but it seemed fitting here. More than fitting.

Regal.

Solid.

Regal.

Proper.

Lionel was positive that this was the way kings of the past had pissed—in an open, yet un-sloppy, stance. He wished *he'd* pissed that way more often as a young man. He wondered if he could start now, if it was too late for him to change everything.

Then there was the quality of the bearded man's stream. It sounded thick. Hearty. Masculine. If Lionel had been a urinal talker he would have had to comment on it. If this man had been his son he'd be damned proud of him. Plus, the sliver of water he glimpsed at the base of the man's urinal wasn't the least bit yellow. He probably made a good point to stay hydrated. Probably ate foods that were good for his prostate, and plenty of greens. It seemed as if this man could piss, *would* piss, forever. There was no way that he got up multiple times a night to urinate. No way there were piss sprinkles left in his underwear after he'd tucked himself back in.

It wasn't until the man had stopped pissing, and shook off, and zipped up, and turned to face Lionel, that Lionel realized what close attention he'd been giving this guy — realized he'd been peeking between the man's arm and the metal divider for too long.

Not that he was looking at anything in particular — he couldn't have seen *that* if he'd wanted to — he was just evaluating flow pressures from more than just an auditory standpoint, just appreciating this man's urethral vitality. And that stance *was* powerful. But only Lionel's father would understand that kind of reasoning. And Lionel's father was strange by most standards, and dead by years now. And suddenly, he wasn't looking under the bearded man's arm, but at the bearded man's chest and face and beard, his eyes continuing upward. He stopped as the man's thick eyebrows arched over his piercing, blue eyes.

But this wasn't a man. It was a boy with a man's height and width, and facial hair, and lead pipes for arms, and tattooed veins. He couldn't have been more than 30, tops. A child, really.

He had hoop earrings in both of his earlobes. Not big hoops, but small hoops.

What did that mean, exactly?

Lionel couldn't remember.

Two small hoops? It was code for something that Lionel didn't understand.

Then just as quickly as he'd taken this all in, Lionel shook his head back towards the wall in front of him, his uncircumcised penis still in his right hand, and this bearded stranger standing next to him. The man continued to stare at him. Breathing on him. Lionel knew how guilty his turning away looked. An innocent man doesn't turn away like that, not while using the middle urinal.

Lionel wanted nothing more than to put his shriveled penis back in his pants. But he couldn't, because first, he had to shake. And a proper shaking was an endeavour at his age. He didn't want

the man-boy to think he was finishing himself off or something. How many shakes were considered masturbation nowadays? What constituted a shake over a jiggle over a felony offense? What kind of message was he sending by looking, or not looking, at this man right now? Was it better to say something or remain silent? Didn't a senator play footsy with someone in the stall next to him once? How many earrings did that man have? Were they big or small? Whatever became of that?

Lionel refused to turn from the wall. His pride wouldn't allow it. He willed himself to pass through the wall and into wherever.

This wasn't anything like the other positions he'd recently put himself in. This was uncharted and unwanted territory. He wished there was some way to go back in time and choose the cemetery over the bookstore. He felt beads of sweat sprout all over his body. The man-boy next to him shook his head and blew one last, long, hot breath through his nostrils like some dragon on that HBO TV show everybody couldn't get enough of. The dragon-man-boy hunched his shoulders then turned and slowly walked to the sink; his wallet-chain jangling at his side like a tiny broken shackle. Lionel heard the water running behind him, the gushing stream being broken by hands, the knob squealing shut. A paper towel dispensed, was torn, and was crumpled. The water turned on again. The metal lid of the garbage can slapped hard enough to keep it swinging on its hinge.

Lionel jumped and screamed (a polytonal high pitch scream, rising and falling quickly, becoming a whimpering, sputtering out) as he felt the splat and ooze of a wet and crumpled something hit and slop down the back of his head. Felt it slide off. Heard it splat on the linoleum.

Instantly, he felt stupid, knew that he hadn't been hurt, only scared. Not scared, but humiliated by this bearded dragon-man-boy throwing a wetted paper towel at him. Still, just to make sure he wasn't hurt, Lionel reached his fingers back to where the balding was taking over. His hand felt wetness too cold to be blood. This was his penance for using the middle urinal, for seeking seats next to people on buses, for wanting a hand to accidentally graze his in the theatre, for going to the grave and telling Ethel all about it.

Lionel stood there now, at the bookstore bathroom's middle urinal. Not turning. Wishing the towel had stuck to his head so he could focus on the point of pressure and not the spot of shame.

"What the fuck's wrong with you, old man?" the dragon-man-boy said. "What *the* fuck?"

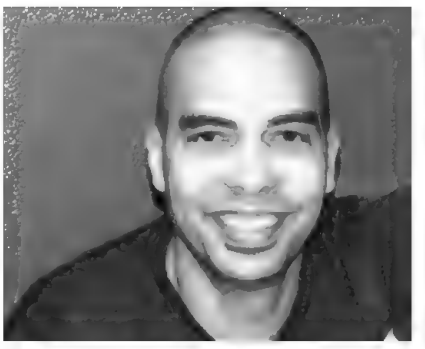
Lionel nodded to himself. He deserved it. He closed his eyes around it and waited for whatever was coming next.

Eventually the door to the bathroom slammed into the rubber grommet on the tile wall and squealed shut again.

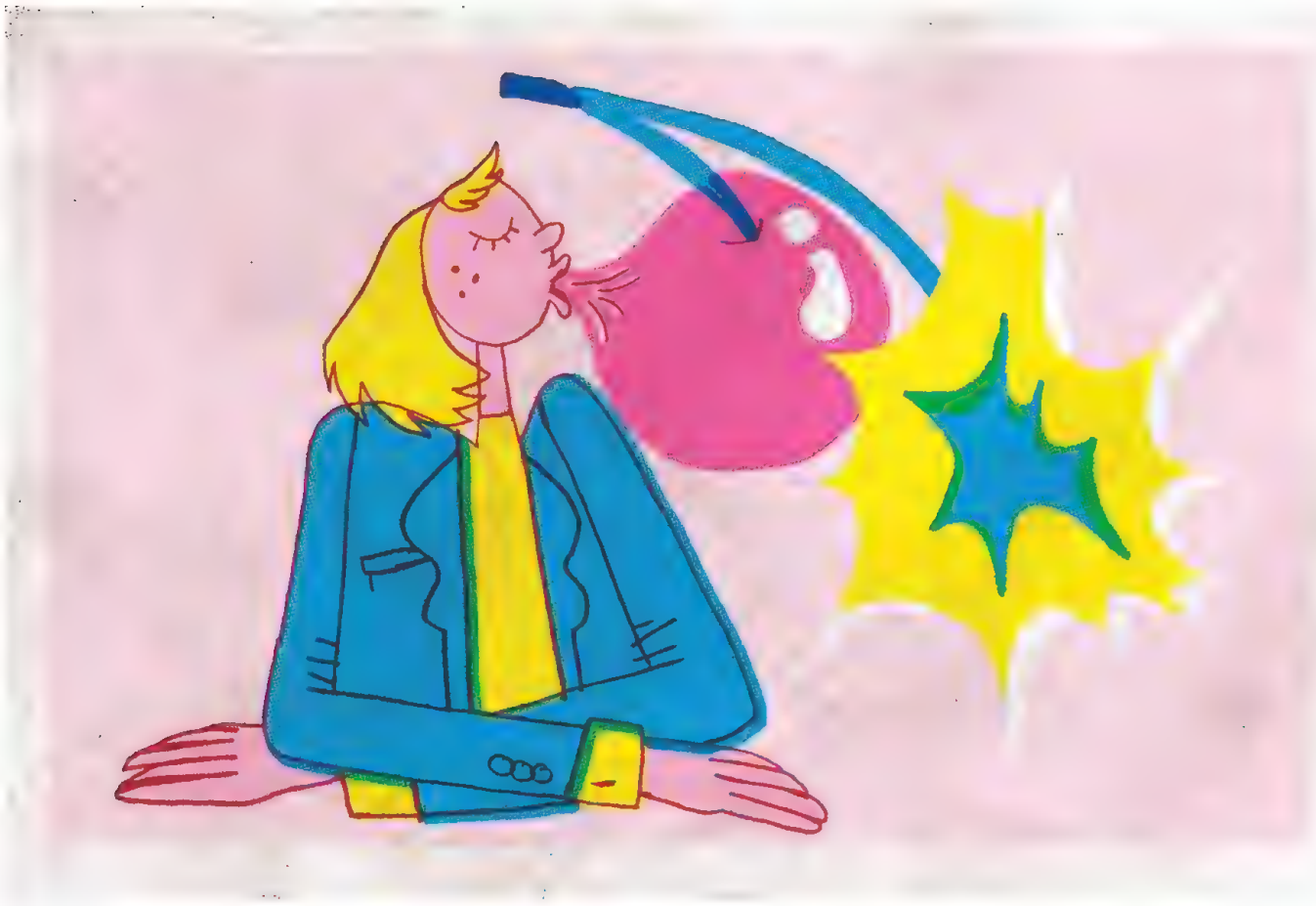
Bathrooms are always tiled. Urinals are always porcelain. Grommets are always rubber.

It was a long time before Lionel stopped shaking. A longer time before he opened his eyes. But no matter how long he stood there, before zipping up, he knew there would be piss sprinkles in his underwear after tucking in.

And that's when he started to cry. bp



Jason Arias lives and works in Portland, OR. His debut short story collection is scheduled to be published by the end of 2018 through Black Bomb Books. To read (or listen to) more stories by Jason visit **jasonariasauthor.com**.



THE MORNING AFTER

By Charlotte Van Ryn

SHE POPS A JUICY Fruit to combat the taste of smoke and the sting of old booze settling into her unbrushed teeth. She chews and the tangy juice of spit threatens to fall from the sides of her mouth as she smiles. The sun has only just started to rise, the sky still blue and purple just like the two little bruises that have formed below her belly button, the imprint of Jake's knobby hip bones as he got on top last night with his eyes closed.

After a while, the Juicy Fruit loses its flavour, so she spits it out onto the curb. She swings her arms as she walks. She wants a cup of coffee.

The coffee shop has a series of paintings on the wall. In the first, a black stallion is being chased by a pick up truck full of cowboys standing up in the back, lassos out. The second is of the same stallion with a harness on its head, rearing up, the rope tied to a fence. Another is of the stallion, running free, with nothing but the wind pushing through the long grass in the background. The fourth is the stallion in a stall, biting at the wooden door. The last is of the stallion on the ground, ropes tied around its legs, binding them together, cowboys all around. She gets her coffee, puts lots of cream and sugar into it.

She knows she is bleeding into the crotch of Jake's prim prom tuxedo as she

walks. Yesterday her mother had done her makeup, put hot curlers into her hair. Her father had put on a nice shirt and bought a hundred dollar bottle of champagne for her and Jake. He looked into Jake's eyes and smiled as their glasses clinked. *Here's to your special day.* Then they all got into Daddy's car and drove to the hotel.

She knows there is no going back from womanhood now, and for that she is glad. She knows that if she doesn't make it back home before six am, her dad will wake up and find out and he won't be able to look at her. But she's not going home. Jake's tux fits her perfectly. She sips her coffee out on the sidewalk and decides her plans for the day. She's going to find a pond and dip her feet in it, be hot and cold at the same time.

She finishes her coffee and steps into a pharmacy, goes to the back, buys a package of Plan B.

All the girls had bought their dresses, the boys only rented their tuxedos. Jake's was a rental, it was due back today, but he is going to have to chase her down if he wants it back. She puts the pills into her backpack and heads toward the park.

Her dress would've been blue, but Kate's dress was blue. Then she picked out a white one in the store, but her mother said no no no, white is for your wedding day. Her shoes were black and her dress was red, tight.

The class of 2016 sat down for a meal. She sat at a round table beside Jake out of obligation. She watched him, head shaved close to the scalp, and remembered when he'd arrived at her school in grade six. She remembered how he'd gotten a boner in gym class and how he'd told everybody that his brother was in the Christian rock band Switchfoot. He'd run around, jumping off the stumps of the trees in the playground they'd cut down in the summer singing "Dare You to Move."

On her other side at the table sat Nicky Malvern. In grade four Nicky didn't want to be called Nicky any more, he told the teachers and the whole class, he was Nick now, even Nicholas would be better. They started talking over their chicken breast and salad. Turns out Nicky was a rock climber, was going to Yellowstone with his club on a five-day climb. He talked about his club, people from all over the city, mostly in their 20s and very cool folks.

Fuck, she thought, as Jake poured half a flask of vodka into his orange soda.

Nicky smiled as he talked about the sunsets on the flank of Mount Washington.

Her mother had given her 50 bucks of "just in case" cash. Just in case she might need to halt the conception of a child. Just in case she might want to eat some cookie dough from the tube. She buys double chocolate chunk and asks the teller to cut the top for her, she does not need a bag.

She can only eat half the tube, chucks the rest out. She's skipping a bit as she walks, is lighter now that her cherry has popped. The black jacket of the suit still smells like him. But she knows her odour is stronger than his, so she starts to run. Sweat pours down her face, her day-old makeup runs into her eyes and stings. It tastes bad.

Jake convinced his father to put his credit card down for the hotel room for the *after party.* When she'd woken up that morning she looked at his little naked butt peeping from under the covers. She took his tux and loafers into the bathroom and put them on, leaving him nothing but her red dress and high heels. She poked her head into the mini bar, saw the mini bottle of champagne he'd told her not to take the night before, because his dad wouldn't pay for it. Now she can hear it slosh back and fourth in her backpack. She arrives at the pond, finds a nice flat rock to sit down on. There are stripes of sweat where the straps of her backpack were resting on her shoulders. She takes the jacket off and dips it into the cool water, puts it back on with a sigh of relief. She rolls the pant legs up and puts her feet in.

Her legs make ripples that travel all through the pond. Nobody else is around. She swishes her legs back and fourth and wiggles her submerged toes. *Fuck that hard dick, you like that?* he'd said, even though he was the one doing the fucking. *You like that? Your pussy is so wet.* His voice was muffled, dug into the pillow. His chin rested on her shoulder. She looked up at the ceiling. Earlier that day she had taken all the glow-in-the-dark stars down from the ceiling of her bedroom. The pussy is soft the sun is hot the dick is hard the water is wet the rocks are hard the air is dry, the sex had not felt good at all.

She digs into her backpack and pulls out the champagne and pops it. The cork skyrockets into the middle of the pond, dunks into the water, bobs up and down. She reads the directions for the pills — two now, two later. She takes the dosage into her palm, raises the bottle and the pills up over her head. She catches sight of her reflection in the water and knows she looks good. Cheers, she says, to the morning after.

Charlotte Van Ryn is a fiction writer who attended the University of King's College in Halifax. In 2016, she won the Blodwyn Memorial Prize for short fiction, and holds a Letter of Distinction from writer David Adams Richards after a mentorship through the Humber School of Writers. Charlotte's short story "Midol" was long listed in *Broken Pencil Magazine*'s Indie Writers' Deathmatch competition in 2018. She is the co-host of a popular reading series, the Listening Party, in Toronto, where she currently lives and works.

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Community Zines as a Response to Exclusion

by the Downtown Eastside Women's Art Collective

THE DOWNTOWN EASTSIDE Women's Art Collective (DEWAC) is a volunteer-run, arts-based organization that serves trans and cis women, two-spirit, and non-binary folks in Vancouver's Eastside. By organizing biweekly workshops at the Carnegie Community Centre, our goal is to connect and inspire individuals in a non-hierarchical and non-judgmental space, and to build a stronger community through art.

We started DEWAC five years ago in response to service gaps we saw in the community. Although there are several wonderful creative spaces for folks living and working in the Downtown Eastside, few are womxn-centred, or offer publishing opportunities. The Carnegie Community Centre, in particular, is disproportionately male-dominated and, because of this, we felt it was necessary to establish a low-barrier haven that focuses on the creative needs of women and non-binary folks. Beyond providing an artistic outlet for community members, we also wanted to give people the opportunity to showcase their work and build connections with other artists. It is our hope that by cultivating these artistic networks, DEWAC may open up future opportunities and collaborations for our members.

In recent years, we expanded our project to include an annual zine. The Downtown Eastiside Women's Art Collective (DEWAC) Zine showcases and circulates the visual and written works produced by DEWAC artists and Eastside community members. The work featured is a wide range of dynamic pieces, that capture the diversity of creatives making art in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Each successful submission is awarded $25, and the artists receive free copies of the zine for their own use.

Zine making has thus become an integral part of our work. Since starting our zine, we have learned to appreciate the medium as a multi-faceted tool. Zines provide a low-cost, accessible outlet for people to express their unique opinions, stories, and lived experiences. Moreover, we have seen the way in which self-publishing can bolster the self-esteem of artists, and empower individuals to continue to create.

We always saw zine making as being inherently political. Our first exposure to zines and zine culture was within feminist circles and DIY spaces. Here, self-publishing was inextricably tied to the activism of those who shared similar perspectives to us, and it was used to push a specific political agenda. In Vancouver, zine making continues to be a hugely influential outlet for artists, writers, and advocates, with spaces like Spartacus Books and Lucky's Comics supporting the work of local zine makers, and community events designed to celebrate self-publishing.

Community zine making and collaborative publishing, in particular, are special processes, because they give individuals equal opportunities to share their own voice. In our experience, zines can be made without having to buy expensive materials, technical acumen, or rent out scarce gallery space. In this way, zine making crosses socioeconomic lines— and allows individuals, regardless of class, education or privilege, to make connections, build community, and share their work with relative ease. Zine making also provides a financial opportunity for artists, without too great of an upfront cost.

Our zine project focuses on the question of how to transcend established art spaces so that everyone has equal opportunity to participate. We want to illuminate the high quality of artwork being produced by women and non-binary artists in the Downtown Eastside. Financial constraints and a lack of opportunity can make it difficult for some DEWAC members to share their work with a wider audience, so our goal is to foster space for this to happen.

Moving forward, our hope is to continue to create opportunities for femme and non-binary artists to share their work through self-publishing. In our view, DEWAC has illuminated the importance of community spaces for creatives, and supporting artistic networks. If you have questions about DEWAC, would like to buy a copy of our latest zine, or get involved, please contact us at **dteswomensartcollective@gmail.com**. bp

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